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THE GOSPEL
ATTRIBUTED TO MATTHEW,
IS THE RECORD
OF THE
WHOLE ORIGINAL APOSTLEHOOD.

BY
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,
AUTHOR OF "VIRGINIUS" AND THE "HUNCHBACK," ETC.; AND OF "THE ROCK OF ROME, AND
THE IDOL DEMOLISHED BY ITS OWN PRIEST."



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TO

THE REV. ALFRED POPE,

INDEPENDENT MINISTER,

LEAMINGTON.

BELOVED AND HONOURED FRIEND AND PASTOR, THIS IS THE THIRD
THEOLOGICAL WORK OF MINE, WHICH, UNDER GOD, OWES ITS
EXISTENCE TO YOUR CHRISTIAN INSTRUMENTALITY.

YOURS, IN GRATITUDE AND CHRISTIAN LOVE,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.



THE
GOSPEL ATTRIBUTED TO MATTHEW
IS THE
RECORD OF THE WHOLE APOSTLEHOOD.



Analogical evidence.

IN the course of human affairs, it hardly ever yet occurred that, where a particular body of men were appointed to watch the progress of a certain work, and, at its completion, to report thereon, a solitary individual of the number undertook, of his own accord, and upon his own exclusive responsibility, to construct the details, and send them forth ; except in the case of dissent, or from the impossibility of consulting the persons who had been originally associated with him. That a body so constituted should commit to a single member the task of preparing such an instrument, is a proceeding of common occurrence ; but that, upon his completing it, they should allow it to be issued without previous exami-

nation, would be an obvious breach of trust and a positive compromising of their own characters. From a sense of duty they would inspect the work, and, if they approved of it, would sanction it ; thereby rendering it, to all intents and purposes, their own. Hence, it is most unlikely that only one of the Apostles, without acting in concert with the rest, should have committed to the world the only *Apostolic* writing which merits the designation of a history of our Saviour's ministry.

Evidence inferrible from the number of the Apostles.

Though the circumstance, that the number of the Apostles corresponds with the number of the tribes composing that family which God selected from the whole human race to be the custodians of his oracles —though that circumstance was, doubtless, intended to signify to them that the same divine existence, who, through Moses, delivered first to them the law of works, was now, in his own person, proclaiming to them the superseding of that law by introducing the promised law of grace ; the Saviour, nevertheless, had a further and still more momentous end in view when he appointed twelve men as his constant attendants, from the commencement to the close of his ministry upon earth ; and that object could not have been other than to constitute them his accredited witnesses ; not merely for the age in which they lived, but for all ages to come. In taking upon

himself our nature, He, that from the throne of the universe, said to his erring creatures, "Come, let us " reason together!" had respect to the features, wherein lay that resemblance to himself, in which it pleased him to form the grand progenitor of our race; and which, though the enemy of God and man has succeeded in weakening and grievously disfiguring it, it has nevertheless surpassed the rankest venom of his malice to utterly efface. In calling upon us therefore to believe that, spirit though he is, he could manifest himself in the flesh—could become palpable to the eye, and the ear, and the touch—he did not disdain to appeal to our reason as a warrant for receiving his testimony that he was God and man, united. He that planned our salvation and achieved it for us, and by multitudes of mighty works gave proof beyond assailment, that in Jesus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, "Say unto the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" consulted, still further, the hesitation of human incredulity by establishing a company of witnesses whose evidence, founded on absolute knowledge, and whose mission, established by miraculous power, should subsist before the world, from age to age, till time should be swallowed up in eternity. Now, as witnesses do not act by representatives, but in their own persons, or by substantiated vouchers of their own implementing, or of their own authorization; so, it necessarily follows that the rest of the apostles, without betraying the

trust that had been committed to them, could not have left it to one of their number to construct, exclusively of their supervision, and independently of their sanction, that record the authorship of which has been wholly attributed to Matthew.

Evidence inferrible from the Gospel of John.

If any one of the peculiar brotherhood surpassed the rest in devotion to his Lord, that disciple, it is most reasonable to conclude, must have been the Apostle John. Although the artist had never employed his genius upon the subject, one could scarcely picture to himself the scene of the last supper, without seeing the beloved disciple seated close to Jesus, and reclining upon his breast. Love begets zeal, and zeal begets action ; and in no possible way could the devotion of John have been manifested so naturally and becomingly as by giving to the world the amplest record of his Master's ministry. And what has he left us, in that way ? A work which can only be regarded as a supplement to the gospel attributed to Matthew ! for upon that gospel, and no other, was the mind's eye of the apostle fixed when he wrote. Now, if it was allowable for one of the apostles to construct, while his brethren were yet in existence, and independently of their supervision or sanction, a narrative of the acts and doctrine of Christ, much more was John at liberty to do so, when he was the sole surviving member of

the brotherhood; and such a narrative he had assuredly left us, had he not already co-operated in preparing the first of the gospels. And mark the strong corroborative light which is reflected upon this hypothesis by the writings of Mark and Luke. Even that of Mark, which is the briefer of the two, nevertheless, as an account of our Saviour's ministry, leaves the gospel of John conspicuously behind—a fact which can only be accounted for by attributing it to the circumstance that Mark had taken in hand a work which was perfectly new to him; while John was only engaged in the further prosecution of a subject, with which, in one manner or another, he had been occupied before.

Evidence inferrible from the writings of Peter.

But what might have been expected from John, inasmuch as he must have stood foremost in love, might still more reasonably be looked for from Peter, who clearly outstripped the rest in ambition, and of whose character envy or jealousy was a congenial feature so prominent as to extort the rebuke of the risen Saviour, “If I will that he tarry till I come, “what is that to thee?” Was such a man content with constructing two comparatively brief epistles, the doctrine of which derived its whole authority from the ample record of another, composed without Peter's co-operation, or revision, or sanction? For who, that studies the New Testament, and is capable

of analyzing an argument, or of tracing effects to their causes, or inferences to their premises, can question the proposition, that, in the words of Christ, as related in the first gospel, the whole marrow of all succeeding doctrine is clearly to be found? It will not suffice to object that, through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, Peter treasured in his own mind "all things whatsoever" Christ "had commanded." Those things, to be rendered available to mankind, must have been set down—recorded, so that all who wished might read them, or hear them read; and accordingly, if Matthew was exclusively the author of the first gospel, upon the evidence of Matthew must Peter and every other writer in the New Testament have rested for substantiating, to the satisfaction of the world, the truth of what he taught. Thus, a solitary member of the brotherhood would have arrogated to himself the honour of promulgating the code, in strict conformity with which all the rest must have taught, to the perfect edification of those whom they instructed. Was this to have been expected? Would this have been becoming? Would this have been reconcileable with the existence of a joint responsibility? of a duty which the whole body had been commanded to discharge; and accordingly must have discharged *together*, or disobeyed? Was Peter, the ever-forward spokesman for the rest, the rebuker of his Master, the resister of his Master's will, the

foremost to boast his fidelity to his Master—was he the man to look passively on, while another, of his own option, took the whole most vital portion of the work upon his own shoulders? Was he likely to be content with the penning of two epistles, while Matthew enjoyed the exclusive credit of constructing a work in which the whole doctrine of those writings was anticipated, howsoever condensed? That work, either by co-operation or sanction, was, most assuredly, his as well as Matthew's; else Peter was precisely the man, beyond all others, who would have transmitted to posterity a gospel of his own!

Evidence inferrible from the writings of James and Jude.

James and Jude write epistles. Could they not as easily have presented the world with gospels? If Matthew wrote independently of his brethren, could not they have done what Matthew did? Would they have contented themselves with bearing secondary and limited evidence, when evidence, primary and in full, was within their compassing? But, it may be said, they confined themselves to writing what they did, because they knew that Matthew had written! What! had Matthew written without “with your leave, or by your leave?” Did Matthew presume to take upon himself a task, for which every one of his brethren was as responsible, and as well qualified, as he? to neglect which, on the part of any one of them, would have rendered his vocation nugatory?

a task, for the performing of which the co-operation of no fewer than twelve chosen men was deemed necessary? Were the twelve chosen as *passive* witnesses? Were they not chosen for the purpose of *bearing* witness, and consequently of *recording* what they had seen and heard? Treason had reduced their number to eleven—though the gap, after the ascension of their Lord, was immediately and appropriately supplied. Was it fit, or likely, that through neglect, or the prosecution of inferior, however important, objects, or obtuseness of apprehension as to the imperative demand of an obviously paramount duty; the eleven should now be reduced to *one*? But they knew that Matthew had written! Did they arrive at the knowledge after the gospel that is attributed to him had been *promulgated*, or before the issuing of it had taken place? *Before*, most assuredly; or Matthew made light of the footing on which they stood, or they themselves made light of it, which would have been still more reprehensible. Probability, though it almost amounts to certainty, is void as a basis for argument, if, before a word of the first gospel was committed to parchment, the whole peculiar brotherhood had not consulted upon the work; and after it had been commenced, had not watched its progress till the completion; or, when it was out of hand, had not revised it and sanctioned it, committing it then to the church, with their common authorisation. Hence it occurred that

James limited himself to an epistle of five chapters ; and Jude to one, consisting only of a single chapter.

Evidence inferrible from the silence of other apostles.

But if it be contended that, in the writings which have come down to us, Peter, James and Jude, sufficiently discharged their duty as witnesses of our Saviour's ministry—though such a proposition must be manifestly untenable—still there remains the utter silence of six of the original peculiar brotherhood to be accounted for ; namely, James the brother of John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, and Simon Zelotes. To these must be added Matthias, who, in order to supply the place of Judas Iscariot, was incorporated with the eleven. Thus, no fewer than seven of the apostles have left the world unprovided with a solitary syllable of their own evidence ! How is this to be accounted for ? Does it consist with what is expected from witnesses ? It is true that, in the gospel attributed to Matthew their names are found in the list of the chosen twelve ; and that, in the record of John, some of them—as Andrew, Philip, Judas, the brother of John, and Thomas—are introduced, speaking. But does this constitute them witnesses ? Witnesses must come forward — must speak for themselves. What avail a host of witnesses, if none be produced ; or if no authentic document of their own implementing, or sanctioning, be forthcoming ? In such a case,

the right to an acre of land could not be established, though the cognisance of a thousand people were appealed to in support of the claimant ! Was it not in the power of those apostles to transmit their own evidence to posterity ; and did they not employ that power ? Was it not incumbent upon them to use it ? Was it not for that identical purpose that they were called ; and did they render it utterly nugatory ? Will it be objected that they accomplished that purpose by their personal labours in teaching the generation of their time ! that men who were selected for the instruction of all ages, fulfilled their mission by teaching, for a single age, without leaving behind them a single authentic vestige of the things that they taught ! But, it may be urged, “ Those things are inferrible from the recorded teaching of their brethren.” What ! sufficiently ? No ! We must have their own record. The nature of their vocation demands it. Their necessarily certain knowledge of its nature demands it. The sense that their duty was the most important that had ever been committed to men demands it. Their supernatural illumination, their far-reaching foresight, demand it. Their direct evidence must exist somewhere, and nowhere can it be found, except in the gospel attributed to Matthew. It is *there* ! *There*, in conjunction with that of the rest of the brethren.

Evidence deducible from the election of Matthias.

The election of Matthias was the first act of the church. It must, consequently, have been a measure to which the first degree of importance was attached. Why? That the grand record should be proceeded with, under the co-operation of the first pointed number of witnesses—twelve. No other reason whatever can be assigned with the shadow of even plausibility. Luke writes (Acts i. 15, &c.), Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said, Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus; for he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein, and his bishoprick let another take.' Wherefore, of those men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

" And they appointed two; Joseph, called Barsabas, who was named Justus; and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, ' Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part in this ministry

“ and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression
“ fell, that he might go to his own place.’ And
“ they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon
“ Matthias; and he was numbered with the
“ eleven.”

Momentous, on more accounts than that of the sublime catastrophe to which it directly led, must have been the gap, the occurring of which the Spirit had foretold upwards of a thousand years before; and for the repairing of which it had, then, expressly provided. But it may be said that, as according to the text, Matthias was chosen to bear witness to the resurrection, it is obligatory upon us to limit his agency to that single object. By no means; as his personal familiarity with the incidents of our blessed Saviour’s ministry from the beginning was obviously an indispensable condition of his fitness as a voucher for the resurrection. And for that fitness the Lord had wonderfully provided. Of the whole common brotherhood assembled, but two had remained steadfast from the beginning; and of those two, but one was perfectly eligible. Peter instanced the resurrection because it was the crowning event of all. The person to be elected in the place of Judas might have been ignorant of certain other occurrences, but a perfect knowledge of that occurrence was imperative. Had the testifying to the truth of that event alone been the consideration, a knowledge of any preceding event in our Saviour’s ministry might have

been dispensed with. If Matthais was selected for the sole purpose of bearing witness to that event; then was that event the sole purpose for which the apostles, to whose number he was added, were incorporated; for, from the moment that he became a member of their body, he participated with them thoroughly in the same privileges and duties. Was it for the time being, alone, that his services were demanded? then to the time being, alone, did their labours specially relate. But their work was to continue for *all* time; and no jot short of that duration was the work of Matthias to continue. Where is such a work to be found? In the New Testament. Where in the New Testament? In the first of the gospels! In the master gospel! In the key to all the succeeding sacred writings. In the broad, common record of "all things whatsoever" our blessed Lord had "commanded"—the record which was to be expected; which no body of men capable of ordinary apprehension, far less inspired by the Holy Spirit, and situated as the apostles were, could possibly have neglected to provide—to provide without delay—to multiply without delay, and to the utmost of their ability—difficult, at the time, as must have been the task. Matthias was elected, at once, that the common document might be, forthwith, prepared with the due number of witnesses. I defy the speculation of the whole world of theologians to imagine any other valid motive for his election.

Evidence inferrible from the martyrdom of James the brother of John.

Fifteen years after the election of Matthias another vacancy occurs in the brotherhood. Herod kills "James the brother of John, with the sword." The gap now filled up? Had it been filled up, the occurrence would have been as circumstantial announced as the supplying of the place of Judas. Is it so announced? No! Why?—Why but because the demand for completing the first appointed number of the apostles no longer existed. The work, for the full authorisation of which Matthias had been chosen, was now finished—thoroughly out of hand, and, therefore, there existed no motive for filling up another vacancy. Though Herod had now put several of the apostles to the sword, the blank would, now, have remained. Though the whole of the apostles had been removed, the grand work was achieved! the common record was complete—complete in numerous duplicates distributed among the churches, and left to their care for preservation and further multiplication under the certain providence of him who had declared that he would never forsake his church. Herod could cut off James the brother of John, but he could not, now, cut off his evidence incorporated as it now was with that of the rest of his brethren. Though the *whole* apostlehood had now suffered martyrdom, Herod and all the potentates of his time could not, now, have brought the

ninistry to a stand. They understood the nature of their mission—that it extended to all succeeding time. The means—the only means—by which that mission could be fulfilled, was now thoroughly executed; and from that time forth, till the end of the world, the twelve appointed witnesses in one compact, inseparable company, were destined to hold on, despite all that hell could accomplish towards obstructing or embarrassing them! Through “journeyings,” through “perils of waters,” through “perils of robbers”—their pretended successors—through “perils by their own countrymen,” through “perils by the heathen,” through “perils in the city,” through “perils in the wilderness,” through “perils in the sea,” through “perils among false brethren,” through “weariness, painfulness, watchings, hunger, thirst, fasting, cold, and nakedness;” through torture and death, by the pincer, by the rack, by the gibbet, by the faggot, by conflagration, and the sword, have they held on for eighteen centuries, unwasted, unscathed to the amount of a hair!—unaltered in body, limb, or feature; as fresh in cheer, zeal, integrity, confidence, and courage, as when, before the thirty-third year of the first century, they set forth together upon their momentous, glorious, time-co-enduring mission!

The evidence of Papias, Irenæus, and Origen.

The public life of Papias is placed between the

years 110 and 116. He writes, "Matthew composed the divine oracles in the Hebrew dialect." Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, 170, writes, "Matthew published, also, a Scripture of the Gospel among the Hebrews, in their own dialect." And Origen, martyred 254, writes, "As I have learned by tradition, concerning the four Gospels, which are received without dispute, by the whole church of God, under heaven; the first was written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it for the believers from Judaism, composed in Hebrew letters." These three authorities are cited by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History. They may be reduced to one; namely, that of Papias. But, supposing them to be independent of one another, they go no farther than to establish Matthew as *the penman* of this gospel. They by no means warrant the conclusion that Matthew was *the only apostle concerned in constructing it*. That he wrote it might be surmised, without the help of Papias, as his occupation fitted him for the task—which was not the case with his brethren, whose pursuits did not demand the knowledge of penmanship. What was remarked by the Jews, with reference to our blessed Lord, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" was, doubtless, applicable to the whole apostlehood, with the exception of Matthew. Howsoever they may have subsequently accomplished themselves—as we have

positive evidence that some of them did, at a much later date ; still, at the time, Matthew was the only member of whom it can be confidently affirmed, that he had learned and was acquainted with letters to a certain extent ; as, otherwise, he could not have been qualified to sit at the receipt of custom. In one of their own number, Christ, by calling Matthew, provided the brotherhood with their penman, that no assistance from without the holy pale might be needed, but that, to the very inditing, the grand parent record of his ministry should be strictly apostolic. Matthew, of course, had his share in the authorship, while the *drawing up* of the record was exclusively his own ; whence it has been most strangely and unscripturally inferred that the *authorship* was exclusively his own. Nor did the foresight of Christ make provision, so timely, for the work, by taking care that the amanuensis of the brethren should be ready ; without a view to its execution, with all possible despatch, as soon as he should have completed his mission of mercy. The first of the gospels was out of hand, or was upon the verge of completion, *before "Samaria received the word," A.D. 32* ; else what John relates in the fourth chapter of his gospel, would have appeared in the gospel assigned to Matthew. The time for the calling in of any people, beyond the Jews, not having yet arrived, and the church being yet in a state of infancy ; the relation, doubtless by the direction of the Spirit, was withheld ; as there would

manifestly have existed a contradiction between the command of Christ, " Go not into the way of the " Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter " ye not;" and his own act, in remaining two days with the Samaritans, and preaching to them, and converting " many " of them during that time. Before the church was perfectly formed—before the Gentile and the Jew were united within the pale of one and the same fold, the publication of any *apparent* discrepancy between the doctrine and practice of Christ would have been avoided. Such avoidance appears; and thus, scripture itself indicates the date of the first apostolic record, and fixes that date about the year 32. Without the help of Papias it might also have been surmised that the first of the gospels was *originally* written in the Hebrew tongue—the Cyro-Chaldaic. As that was unquestionably the language in which the Lord preached to the Jews, so in that language would the first record of his preaching be composed; and would be delivered, first, to them by the apostles, as the good news had been first proclaimed to them by the mouth of Christ. That even as early as the commencement of the second century, the existence of this fact should have become a matter of mere tradition—that, at that time, no single Hebrew version of the gospel should have been preserved, suggests a fearful, though consistent, reflection, as regards the dealings of God, where the counsels of his mercy are abused. The Jews had

ceased to come in. They were now arrayed in stubborn hostility to the mission of grace; and the document which bore upon its face the evidence of having been expressly addressed to them, was withdrawn and irrecoverable! Those two prophetic bursts of the Spirit, standing, side by side, in Isaiah, and signally contrasted—the one, reproachful of the Jews, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath “the arm of the Lord been revealed?” &c.; and the other, congratulatory of the Gentiles, “Sing, O barren, “thou didst not bear,” &c.—were now fulfilled. He that had been rejected by the Jews was now in the act of being received by the gentiles; and, consequently, while it was ordained that every trace of the Hebrew version should vanish, it was decreed that, in the language of the latter people alone, the gospel should thenceforward be preserved and propagated.

The direct authentic teaching of the whole apostlehood, for all time, demonstratively indicated by the parting words of our Lord.

“ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing “them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, “and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe “all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And “lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the “world.”

Misled by the common belief that only five of the

original brotherhood have written, Henry and Scott, in their commentaries, present us with a strange compound of truth and error in their attempts to explain this text. In reference to the Lord's promise, "Lo, I am with you alway"—all days—"to "the end of the world," Henry remarks, "Not with "your persons, they died quickly, but first, with you "and your writings." He absolutely grants the proposition which he has just denied; for what are we to understand by the term "you," thus distinguished from the phrase "your writings," except it be the persons of the apostles—that is, their personal teaching? Now, as the teaching which the Lord contemplates was to last *till the end of the world*, it cannot possibly be their teaching *in person* which is indicated here. For *that*, their Lord had already sufficiently prepared them, forewarning them that it must be carried on patiently and perseveringly during their lives, amidst divers persecutions. A grander field than that which their labours could possibly occupy during their life-time, and a vocation of incomparably longer tenure, were now the object of his solicitude. Here, as plainly as language, short, alone, of literal expression, could state it, he commands that a record of his ministry, attested by every individual of the company whom he addresses, should be forthwith constructed, as that was the only means under heaven whereby his command could be obeyed, and his promise be fulfilled.

Now, had Matthew Henry written, “with you *in* ‘your writings,’ which he unquestionably would have done had he not been misled by the received opinion that only five of the special brotherhood had resorted to the pen—he had hit the truth; and, perhaps, had avoided the error of countenancing, though in a qualified sense, the damnable dogma of *apostolic succession*. Proceeding, he says, “Secondly, with you “and your successors; with you and all the ministers “of the gospel in the several ages of the world; “with all to whom this commission extends; with “all who, being duly called and sent, thus baptize “and teach.” What! does not Christ speak plain enough? Did he not declare, before this, that he had done with parables? Successors of the apostles! Are such functionaries named in the text? Are such functionaries mentioned in any other part of scripture? Paul had his agents; the primitive brotherhood had, doubtless, theirs; but agents are not successors. Not one jot beyond the apostles does the promise of the Lord extend. They are pre-eminently, the “duly called and sent,” as the eye and ear witnesses of the Lord’s ministry, from its commencement till its close—a condition essential to their paramount vocation—a condition in which it is doubtful whether Mark or Luke, though constituted evangelists by the call of the Spirit, participated even in a limited degree, and in which it is certain that even the glorious Paul in no degree, whatsoever,

participated. But was not Paul also duly called sent? Yes; to the extent of his calling and ~~se~~ ing. He was called after Christ had been rai and therefore could not bear witness to what occurred before that event; he was sent to Gentiles *of his time*, and even then, he could have taught *without the witness of the twelve*. teaches now? Yes; but in conjunction with th Could they teach, except in conjunction with h *fully* teach? Yes. The spirit of whatsoever propounds, whether with regard to doctrine or cipline, is to be met with in their record. Paul had been directly instructed by Christ him True! but the twelve had received the same insti tion long before Paul's conversion. And tl existed an obvious reason for Paul's having been instructed, a reason plainly inferrible from his account of the jealous questioning to which he subjected in Jerusalem. An accessory, as, by own confession, he had been to the murder of Stepl and, subsequently, a rancorous persecutor of church; the fact of his conversion, and the rela of the occurrence that led to it, might not h obtained credence at Jerusalem, had not Christ t supplied him with a miraculous proof of their real Peter, and James, and John hesitated before t gave him the right hand of fellowship; and c extended it, and agreed to his entering upon mission when he had produced credentials of tl

Lord's own direct providing. And for thus insisting upon the paramount dignity of the first record, as the testimony of the eleven, with the addition of Matthias, I plead the warrant of scripture; and upon the same warrant I assert its sufficiency as the fountain of all doctrine and discipline. Let it be recollected that, by that record alone, or by the personal teaching of the apostles, which must necessarily have thoroughly consisted with whatsoever they taught in writing—the church must have been *solely* instructed up to the year 52. Was it not competently taught? Is it conceivable that, during a period of twenty years, there could have existed the least deficiency in the instruction of the church, because Mark and Luke had not yet written their gospels, and because Paul had not yet addressed his epistle to the Thessalonians? And does this view of the case detract from the sacredness of the gospel of Mark, or of the gospel and history of Luke, or of the epistles of Paul? Not a jot! It is the view which scripture authorises me to take; and I proclaim it humbly, yet with unflinching confidence. Those writings, by the providence of God, and not by the dictum of men, have survived for eighteen hundred years, and for that purpose were, by the Spirit, suggested to those who wrote them; but in none of these penmen do I find, in scripture, a warrant for classing him among the original select disciplehood, whose formal peculiar inauguration is thrice an-

nounced; who had constantly accompanied the Lord during his ministry; who received his promise that, at the regeneration, they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; who partook with him of the last supper, and to whom on that occasion he preached, in final preparation for their mission, and for whom he then elaborately prayed; who received his commission to instruct mankind to the end of the world, and his promise that he would accompany them in their glorious time-enduring ministry; who, in Revelation, are seen in the twelve stars which crown the woman by whom the church is personified; and whose names are written in the twelve foundations of the heavenly city. Such men I find alone in the eleven; and along with them, in virtue of their election of him, I find *Matthew*—the only true apostolic successor—the substitute for Judas; *Matthias*, whose claim, if Mark and Luke were present when he was chosen, was declared by the decision of the whole disciplehood, general as well as special, to be superior to theirs—nor his alone, but also that of *Barsabas*. Rejecting, then, all human evidence, as I uncompromisingly do, and trusting solely and implicitly to that of God's holy word; to what other conclusion can I come than this, namely, that the special disciplehood, including the man whom they adopted into their body to complete their original number, constitute, independent of all collateral aid, the fully competent authority for all

Christian doctrine, and for all Christian discipline ; and are the immeasurably most honoured, and consequently most to be honoured, agents of the Lord ?

To return to Henry's explanation of the text, as regards its fulfilment by the means of *succession*. The church has existed for eighteen centuries ; millions of sermons that have been preached in it are extant ; and, when any Christian who deserves the title can point out in any one of them a single *truth*, the essence of which cannot be found in the gospel attributed to Matthew ; then may theologians be at liberty to dilate upon *apostolic succession*. The blindness of the church to the fact that the fulfilment of the Lord's commission and promise to his apostles is to be found in the New Testament, as otherwise, it must be void—which is an impossibility—would be perfectly inexplicable were it not traceable to the belief that the direct testimony of only five of the apostles appears there ; and more especially to the evil prestige of a dogma, as welcome to the gross palate of priestcraft, as it is revolting to the spirit of Christianity. Successorship ! The prophets teach without successorship, and why not the apostles ? Poets, orators, historians, philosophers live without successorship ; and why not the apostles ? Does the man who lectures upon Euripides or Shakspear indulge in flattering himself that he is the successor of the one or the other ? Why, then, should the man who preaches from Matthew or John allow

himself to be smitten with the delusion, that he is a successor of the apostles? Well! but the transmission of the Spirit demands the existence of succession? The transmission of the Spirit never went one inch beyond the apostles, in their own time; what, since? They, and they *alone*, could impart it. Paul was an exception? Yes: but an exception confirming the rule. Paul had a special commission. Did Ananias confer the Spirit upon Paul. His words are, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way, as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." But was it Ananias that conferred the Holy Ghost? The Lord's commission to him is limited to the restoring of Paul's sight! The sole recorded result of his visit, is the restoration of sight. Ananias was one of the common disciplehood. The common disciplehood, after receiving the Holy Ghost, could work miracles; but they could not enable others to work them—they could not *confer* the Holy Ghost. Philip was distinguished among the common disciplehood, as a deacon of the church; he is declared to have been full of the Holy Ghost; but he could not *confer* it. He converted the people of Samaria. "They gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles "which he did." He converted Simon, the sorcerer, so that "Simon himself believed; and when he was "baptized he continued with Philip, and wondered,

“ beholding the miracles and signs which were “done.” But though Philip could work miracles himself, he could not enable any one of his converts to work them, through conferring the Holy Ghost ; so that Peter and John were sent to complete the work which Philip had begun ; and *then* the Holy Ghost was received by Philip’s converts. And the privilege which the apostles exclusively, then, enjoyed, they retain and *exercise*, too, up to the present day, notwithstanding the truculent lie which the craft of Rome, at the suggestion of Hell, has invented in order to filch it from them. Without the apostles, as they still minister in Scripture, supported by the prophets, the Lord still accompanying them there, and there *alone* ; there is no receiving of the Holy Ghost—no knowledge of the Holy Ghost—no notion of the Holy Ghost !

Scott, in his comment on this text, is equally at fault. Succession still, but with broad, though vain, enlargement. This is his remark upon the Saviour’s command and promise, “He did not say, “to death, or to eternity, for that might have been “restricted personally, to the apostles ; but, to the “end of the world, which includes all succeeding “ministers, congregations, and disciples, in every age “and nation, even to the consummation of all things. “He is with us in the power of his protecting “providence, and by the influences of his teaching, “sanctifying, and comforting Spirit.” It would

have puzzled Scott to show how our Saviour's saying *to death or eternity* would have altered the case. Ever since the blessed day when the Lord secured his *doctrine* from corruption by confiding the propagation of it exclusively to the eleven, the whole church, with the single exception of Paul, has received no other spiritual illumination than that which radiates from the page of their conjoint testimony—the record which has been hitherto most erroneously regarded as the exclusive work of Matthew. If exception be claimed for the gospels of Mark and Luke, before it be granted the objector must prove that the writings of those evangelists enunciate *doctrine* which is nowhere else to be lighted on. We have the holy Twelve! Need we ask for more? But, lest we should, the Holy Spirit has added Mark, Luke, and Paul, as so many *witnesses* to the truth of what is *stated* by the Twelve. This is the only view of the case which thoroughly consists with scripture. I return to the text.

These words of our Lord were addressed to a company of eleven men. They enjoin the teaching of all things whatsoever Christ had commanded; they promise, to the whole eleven, his constant presence till the end of days, in the teaching of those things; *his* constant presence demands *their* constant presence; and, consequently, the whole of that company must have been teaching up to the present day, and must continue to teach till the final day; otherwise in vain

has Christ declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." To say that five individuals out of the eleven—Matthew, John, James, Peter, and Jude—are teaching at the present day, will not meet the result for which the words of our Lord command us, most clearly, to look. The work which eleven men were commanded to execute, till the end of the world, does not more imperatively require the existence of that work, at the present time, than it demands the existence at the present time of every individual of the eleven to whom it was collectively committed. The whole number must be in existence now, as Moses and all the prophets who have written are, now, in existence. Nor can the words of Christ be said to be fulfilled in the *whole* of the documents which the five have handed down to us. Those words exclusively respect "all things whatsoever" the Lord had commanded; that is, the whole doctrine of Christ. John omits numerous things which were taught by Christ. He supplies discourses of Christ, but without a jot of addition in point of doctrine. James, Peter, and Jude write epistles, the substance of which, though suggested by the Spirit, amounts to nothing more than doctrine harmonising with that of Christ, as set forth in the gospel assigned to Matthew. Far less, then, than even John, can those three members of the company to which our Lord addressed his parting injunctions, and gave his parting promise,

be said to "teach all things whatsoever" had been commanded. The gospel assigned to Matthew is the only *apostolic* writing which exhibits to us what the words of Christ enjoin us to expect, as regards his doctrine. Those words equally enjoin us to expect in the teaching of that doctrine, for all succeeding time, the co-operation of the eleven apostles to whom they were addressed ; and, consequently, if Matthew is the only individual of the brotherhood who can be said to teach it, the declaration of Christ, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," is void!—his words as to what they appoint, more durable than heaven and earth, *have passed away*—which is an impossibility.

The words of our Lord, as recorded in John xv. 27, manifestly indicate the gospel which has been assigned to Matthew, and establish it to be the joint record of the whole apostlehood.

In the fifteenth chapter of John, and at the twenty-seventh verse we read, "And ye shall bear witness, "because ye have been with me from the beginning." These words were addressed to the whole of the eleven ; and consequently the witness of the whole must be forthcoming. The nature of that witness is positively defined by the announcement of the circumstance which qualifies them for bearing it ; namely, "because ye have been with me from the "beginning." We must look, then, for an apostolic writing which records our Saviour's ministry "from

“ the beginning ;” and where we find such a record, we must come, in the absence of any similar document, to one or the other of these two conclusions ; namely, that in the first of the gospels we have the joint witness of the whole brotherhood ; or that only one of the brotherhood understood the plain language of his Master, and acted in accordance with it—an inference wholly derogatory to the sagacity, integrity, and zeal of the rest.

The parting command of Christ, “Go ye, and teach “ all nations,” &c., refers, exclusively, to the *doctrine* of our blessed Lord. The words which I have quoted from John, and which were uttered previously, have regard to the *incidents* of his ministry, as well as to that doctrine. John had witnessed those incidents *to a greater extent than Matthew*, whose call was *subsequent* to that of John ; and, yet, whereas the former recounts multitudes of miracles, which our blessed Lord performed at the very outset, the latter instances only a few isolated ones throughout the whole of his gospel. Hence *he* can by no means be said to have borne witness from the beginning ; and yet such witness his Lord commanded him, as well as *Matthew* and the rest, to bear. Peter rehearses only one incident in his Master’s life—the transfiguration. Indeed he can only be said to allude to it, and this in a manner which indicates that those whom he addresses were familiar with the circumstance, in consequence of their having had access to some

writing in which it had been recorded—doubtless the gospel assigned to Matthew. James and Jude instance no single miracle of our Lord's performing ; while the remaining six are utterly silent, both with regard to his discourses and miracles, as well as to his journeyings and sojournings. That the words of the Lord should pass away was an impossibility ; that there were only two courses by which they could be fulfilled is manifest. Either each of the apostles must have provided his own independent witness, or the whole of them must have united in constructing or sanctioning one common witness. They did not adopt the former course ; and consequently, they must have resorted to the latter ; and the gospel attributed to Matthew—the only apostolic writing which presents us with what those two commands of our Saviour direct us to expect—must have been the result. It was an occurrence as clearly foretold by Christ, as the destruction of Jerusalem ; and, consequently, was as certain to take place.

Evidence inferrible from the zeal of the apostles.

The earliest date assigned to the first of the gospels is the year 37—eight years after the crucifixion of our blessed Lord. Thus is its reputed author charged, though indirectly, with deferring or protracting, most unaccountably, the issuing of a work which ought to have been executed *without delay*. The zeal of his brethren, if not his own zeal,

would have looked to this. To leave the church for eight years without a formal authentic account of their Master's ministry would have ill consisted with that devotion to his cause, with which the apostles, one and all, could not have failed to be animated. Even Paul, though he surpassed them in labours, could not possibly have equalled them in love for him whom, for three years, they had constantly accompanied; and who, independently of their knowledge that he was the Messiah, had endeared himself to them by every claim that could appeal to natural affection—by meekness, patience, tenderness, admonition, faultlessness, virtue; surpassing infinitely whatsoever the world had witnessed before. What zeal that ever burned in a human breast could compete in intensity with theirs! Would they content themselves with a *vivid voce* resumptory narrative of their Master's ministry—of doctrine and events so redounding to his honour and glory? Would they not see the necessity of setting own with all despatch, the whole, in order—which as impossible without committing the whole to writing? Would they not be aware of the paramount advantage of such a process—that thereby they could be enabled to propagate the truth where they could not promulgate it in person; and not only for the time being, but for all time to come? Christ had nominated them his trustees for the world throughout all future ages; how then could they

fulfil their duty except by recording his bequest, or causing it to be recorded? And though, from his parting words, they must have felt the most positive assurance that every individual of their number would be spared, until the all-momentous document should have been completed; yet durst they not have tempted God by presuming upon that assurance, and consequently, practising the least unnecessary delay in executing the work. Besides, there existed this stimulus to expedition—they had been admonished of being obnoxious to persecution, even to the undergoing of a violent death. The last words of Christ commanded the teaching of all nations to the end of the world; and no sooner had they taken their last look of him than they set about fulfilling the injunction which was freshest in their hearts. That work was their first business, towards the executing of which their supplying the place of Judas, by electing Matthias, was the preparatory step; and, once commenced, they continued to carry it on, hand-in-hand, with their care of the church—which, though an object of vital importance, was, nevertheless, only secondarily so, inasmuch as the interests of all future ages must have outweighed the interests of a single age. It was not Jerusalem, together with Judea, Samaria, and the immediately adjacent countries, but the whole world, which was to constitute the field of their labours. By their word alone was mankind, for their time and for

succeeding time, to be instructed. "Not only for these"—the apostles—says Christ, "do I pray, but for all who shall believe on me through their word." Here a joint record of their Lord's ministry is as clearly indicated as language can make it. all who believe through their word are the elects for whom the Son supplicates the Father, in their word must be present, wheresoever belief is present. It must be their conjoint testimony, proceeding directly from themselves, and handed down from generation to generation till the end of the world. Into *their* word are all the preceding writings of the New Testament receivable. Mark and Luke, by the direction of the Spirit, bear evidence to *their* word. John, in his gospel, establishes their word; supplying, but without a jot of addition, in point of doctrine, what, for *obvious reasons*, had been omitted. Paul establishes *their* word, as constituting the foundation upon which the churches are built. James, Peter, and Jude found their epistles upon the word, in constructing which they had co-operated. Even in Revelation the fundamental argument is in the word! They alone are sent by Christ into the world, as Christ himself was sent by the Father into the world. They alone are the custodians of the word, to bind or loose, to retain or remit; and those powers are found alone in their word, whether associated by themselves or repeated by others.

That word was to survive them till the end of the world—a result which could not be secured otherwise than by recording what their Lord had taught in their hearing, or performed before their eyes. By such a process alone could they fulfil their mission, as by a similar process Moses and the prophets had fulfilled theirs. That mission was the paramount duty which had been entrusted to them. That mission was the only subject of their Master's last command. Not to the generations of the time, but to those of all succeeding time, did that command refer: and, consequently, it is disparaging to the capacity, the zeal, and the fidelity of the apostles, to believe that, for a series of eight or nine—far more, of twenty or thirty years—they would have given their attention exclusively or chiefly, to an object of minor importance—that of instructing their contemporaries—to the neglect of one, the momentous nature of which was stupendously and incalculably superior.

Circumstances that imperatively demanded despatch in preparing a formal account of our Saviour's ministry.

When we consider the solemn nature of the trust which had been committed to the apostles, and the circumstances in which they were placed; we inevitably come to the conclusion that they must have lost no time in formally recording the events of their Master's ministry. To believe that for a series of years they would have limited themselves to oral instruction, is nothing short of attributing to men,

who were supernaturally illuminated, the greatest obtuseness of intellect, and an utter destitution of foresight. They *must* have been aware that their written evidence would possess a weight infinitely greater than any that could possibly be attached to evidence by word of mouth; inasmuch as the chief importance of the latter would pass away with themselves; whereas, the former, being calculated to survive them, in case of such survival, would retain, after their decease or removal, the very same value that it possessed in the beginning. By deferring, for a series of years, the executing of such an instrument, they would have afforded to their enemies a handle for impugning the veracity of its statements; whereas, by setting about it, at once, and completing it with the utmost despatch, they would obviate the slightest hazard of disparagement. *Now* was the time! *Now*, when the momentous events which they were about to narrate were vividly fresh in the recollection of adversaries, as well as of friends. The scribes and the pharisees, the rulers and chief priests, would not, *now*, dare to deny what numbers of their own body had witnessed; and had acknowledged as unquestionable evidence of *superhuman* power—the miracles which Jesus had performed. And, even supposing that, in their impenetrable hardness of heart, and in the madness of their ferocious hatred of Christ, they had ventured upon the desperate attempt; the sick whom, upon the instant, he had restored to health; the lepers,

whom he had cleansed ; the dumb, whom he had made to speak ; the maimed, whom he had made whole ; the crippled, whom he had made to walk ; the blind, whom he had made to see ; the possessed, from whom he had cast out devils ; the dead, whom he had recalled to life ; all these, amounting, in the aggregate to thousands, were now, without, perhaps, a single exception, alive and at hand, to vouch what he had done, and to back their testimony by appealing to crowds of witnesses ! Two years only had passed since he had fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley loaves and two fishes ; and only one year, since, with seven loaves and a few fishes, he had performed a similar miracle in the instance of four thousand men, besides women and children. Of these, the grand mass must have still remained to silence the wildest clamour of question, and cover the objectors with overwhelming shame and confusion.

Nor was it in those alone who experienced the superhuman power of Christ, but in those who witnessed its operation, that the perfect impossibility of shaking its evidence resided. The latter amounted to multitudes that defied any approach to calculation. Take, for example, what occurred at the very outset of his ministry.

“ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease among

“ the people. And his fame went throughout all
“ Syria : and they brought unto him all sick people
“ that were taken with divers diseases and torments,
“ and those which were possessed with devils, and
“ those which were lunatic, and those that had the
“ palsy ; and he healed them. And there followed
“ him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and
“ from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from
“ Judea, and from beyond Jordan.”

Now, wherein lay the paramount weight of such evidence as this ? In recording it formally, whenever it might please the apostles to take up the pen ? No ! but in setting it down with the utmost possible despatch, the moment they entered on their mission. In what consisted, chiefly, the fact that its truthfulness was unassailable ? In its having been witnessed by tens, if not hundreds, of thousands, who looked on while the sick and diseased, the possessed and the lunatic, were healed by the word of Christ. If the great multitudes that followed him from Galilee and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond Jordan, still doubted, in the hardness of their hearts, that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled—that now they “ beheld their God ”—that he whom Moses and the prophets had hitherto revealed to them in Scripture, was now made manifest to them by the absolute testimony of their eyes and ears ; still, to doubt that testimony, as regarded the miracles that he performed, was an

utter impossibility. They heard the command, "Be whole," or "Be clean," or "Come out of him," and they saw that, no sooner was it uttered than it was obeyed. If, in the first instance, credence became paralyzed through incontinent amazement, it quickly recovered, and grew stronger and stronger, as prodigy succeeded prodigy; while confirmation was at hand, on every side, in mouths a-gape, and eyes a-blaze, with kindred admiration and conviction.

Consider the vantage ground which the apostles could occupy by recording these occurrences with the least possible loss of time. Were they themselves so dull of apprehension as not to be aware of it? Being aware of it would they not profit by it? Would they, on the contrary, defer, from year to year, the adopting of the only mode by which they could fully avail themselves of it? 37, or 38, is the earliest date assigned to the first of the gospels. This allows a lapse of nine or ten years—time for impressions to grow faint, if not wear out. The other dates, assigned by theologians, range from 41 to 64. Irenæus, one of the bulwarks of the Roman heresy, gives the year 61—time for a new generation! Consult the Fathers, as they are anti-scripturally called, for dates or anything else! No! consult Scripture for *every* thing. Everything that concerns Scripture is to be met with in Scripture *itself*; and the date of the first gospel is there, so far as this—the writing must have been complete by the

year 32; that is, before "Samaria had received the word," else Christ's transactions there, as related by John, had not been suppressed in the common grand testimony—the gospel assigned to Matthew.

The prompt execution of the first record indicated by the total absence of counter statements.

Including Matthias, the apostlehood consisted of twelve poor and humble men; whereas their adversaries were numerous, and embraced the most powerful classes, both civil and ecclesiastical.

Those adversaries they boldly and formally impeached, in the name of the Lord, and in the very words of the Lord—charging them with shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men; with devouring widows' houses, and, for a pretence, making long prayers; with compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, making him, two-fold more, the child of hell than themselves; with teaching that whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor—whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift which is upon it, he is guilty; with paying tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, but omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; with straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel; with making clean the outside of the cup and the platter, while within they are full

of extortion and excess; with resembling whitened sepulchres, which, indeed, look beautiful outwards, but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness; with being obnoxious to the damnation of hell, as serpents and as a generation of vipers; with killing and crucifying, scourging in their synagogues, and persecuting from city to city, prophets, and wise men, and scribes—sent from God. Were they not aware of invectives which must have been openly and reiteratedly rehearsed in the church? If they had the address to send spies to Christ, would they not send spies among his followers? Did they stand under such a torrent of withering invectives, and not feel them? Might they not have rendered them powerless by impugning, even in part, if they could, the truthfulness of what was alleged? Did they attempt to do so? That Christ had thus arraigned them must have been known to them, for it was done in the presence of "the multitude;" and doubtless the knowledge of that fact must have whetted the malice that extended him upon the cross at Golgotha. By shedding his blood they had hoped to seal his lips for ever, and put a final period, not only to his teaching, but to his denunciations; and, lo! he denounces and teaches again, in the page of the apostles; so that not only Jerusalem, now, but all the cities of the world, may listen to him! In that page, multiplied no doubt as expeditiously as possible, to ensure its preservation, and delivered to the

custody of the several branches of the church in Jerusalem and Judea, by a band of poor and humble, but heroic, men, in defiance of the whole mass of the hostile, and great, and powerful—in that page they learn that their characters, painted in the most odious colours are recorded, without the possibility of disproving what is alleged, in consequence of the recency and publicity of the occurrence—namely, that in the presence of a multitude of witnesses, they had been made the objects of the most appalling charges; and that, by a Man, whose claim to superhuman power—to whatsoever source they might have ascribed that power—a council of their own body had allowed, numbers from among them had witnessed and admitted, and the common inhabitants of Jerusalem and of Judea were at hand to substantiate. Postponement for a series of eight or nine, much more of from twelve to thirty-five years,* would have materially altered the state of the case, would have affected injuriously the efficacy of the record; would have given time and opportunity for the construction of counter-statements, as impressions grew weaker and witnesses decreased. The total absence of such statements, weighed in connection with the most imperative demand for them, on the part of rancorous and unscrupulous enemies, forms one of the strongest collateral proofs in favour of Christianity; and can-

* The dates ascribed to the first of the gospels varied from the year 37 to the year 64.

not otherwise be accounted for than by attributing it to the fact that the common formal apostolic evidence, having been prepared and issued without delay, the production of such instruments must have appeared to be utterly useless in the eyes of those who would have been most interested in constructing them ; and who, had they constructed them, would have enjoyed the same facility of transmitting them to posterity, as the apostles were possessed of for securing perpetuity to theirs.

Postponement in commencing, prosecuting, and completing such a trust, as that which the apostles had in charge, and for the executing of which every individual of their body was, alike, most solemnly responsible, was a contingency which could not have occurred in the case of a company of ordinary men, selected to detail the events of an ordinary proceeding. How unlike, then, to have happened in the instance of men, whose faculties had been expanded and quickened by three years' companionship with their God, whom he had prepared to expect every species of hindrance which the rage and malice of his enemies could throw in their way, and who, to supply the loss of his visible presence had secured to them the presence of the Holy Ghost, as their comforter, remembrancer, and instructor ! Would men, superhumanly enlightened as they were, let slip the proper time of all ? suffer the least advantage to escape ? defer and defer, year after year, while friend

after friend, and enemy after enemy, was dropping off—for enemies as well as friends were their witnesses with regard to the things to which Christ himself more than once appealed, as his paramount vouchers for the truth that he was the Messiah—the “works” that he performed. And if there existed on their part the possibility of remissness so monstrous, so inexplicable and inexcusable, had they not the Spirit abiding in them, to arouse them, rebuke them, and tell them to fall to work? Would not He who had put the pen into the hands of Moses and the prophets, have presented the same instrument to theirs, and urged their prompt employment of it, at the most critical time, as the most likely way to stop the mouth of documentary objection; as well as the certain and only one, whereby they might fulfil their mission, as the instructors of all nations and all ages!

That the gospel, which has been assigned to Matthew as its author, was originally written in the Hebrew tongue, is a conclusion at which, without the evidence of Papias, one could not fail to arrive, upon weighing the single fact, that, as our blessed Lord must have preached in that language, so the first record of his doctrine would be delivered in that language to the people who spoke it, and who were the first objects of his mission. But, of that people, there existed numerous branches, the descendants of Jews, who, more or less remotely, had settled among

the gentiles, and whose descendants spoke the tongue, current among the people in whose countries they had been brought up ; and were distinguished from the inhabitants of Judea by the name of Hellenists. By these, at the time of the apostles, as it is well known, the ancient volume was read in the Greek version—the Septuagint. Hence there existed an imperative demand for a Greek version of the new law—the gospel—constructed, if not simultaneously with the other, yet, most assuredly, as soon as ever the latter was out of hand ; in order that the *whole* family of the lineal, or adopted, children of Abraham should be provided, both at home and abroad, with the confirmation of the Messiah's advent. It is melancholy to review the guesses which, through consulting *tradition*, most learned theologians have squandered in respect to the origin and date of *this* version ; whereas, had they only considered the last command of Christ, the consequent urgent and awful responsibility of the apostles, and the division of the people into two grand classes, one of which read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the other in Greek, they could hardly have failed to arrive at the conviction that it was of direct apostolic derivation, and that its most probable date was far earlier than the earliest yet attributed to it.

Presumptive evidence of an early and common record.

But, if the apostles co-operated indeed in con-

structing the gospel which has been assigned exclusively to Matthew, and without loss of time began and prosecuted the work ; it may be objectingly asked, how came it to pass that, in the history of the church, the occurrence of such co-operation, and of such despatch, should have been passed over by the historian without his having thrown the least light upon the subject ? This is not the fact. The light is there, though, hitherto, as it seems, it has escaped the research of theologians—certainly not through its faintness, but through the unaccountably defective appreciation of circumstances which, *prayerfully* examined, would have suggested the probability that it might be found there. Unless I mistake, it appears, and far from obscurely, in the sixth chapter of *“The Acts,”* where the order of deacons is instituted—a measure dictated, as it seems to me, by a peculiar demand for suspending the public functions of the apostles, and by the opportunity which favoured such remittance, at a time when the church was engaged in a secular transaction—“the serving of tables.” Their language on the occasion is this—“It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the

“ word.” It is true that the phrases, “ the word of God” and the “ ministry of the word,” may be referred to their preaching, but it is also true that they may bear reference to a record which they were engaged in preparing, and by which the ministry of the word could be carried on in the most extensive sense of the phrase. And, moreover, there is a clause in the passage which goes far towards establishing the latter interpretation, namely, “ We will give ourselves continually to prayer.” The work demanded the constant operation of prayer; for, though their Lord had promised that everything which he had said to them should be recalled to their memories by the instrumentality of the Spirit; still, they would implore assistance, as they proceeded, and give thanks, as they received it. Not relying upon my own judgment, but upon the belief that I have obtained the guidance, which, in commencing this inquiry, and through the whole course of prosecuting it, I have solicited, in the all-availing name of our God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; I declare my firm conviction that the duty with which the office of “ serving tables” interfered, was of a strictly private nature, and bore no reference whatsoever to the *personal* teaching of the apostles. Such teaching, I conceive, to have been thoroughly suspended when the church was otherwise engaged, than in listening to instruction; or in attending upon the apostles in their public ministry.

Further and clearer light from The Acts.

I have said, that, in preparing the gospel, attributed to Matthew, there existed an imperative demand for expedition; and can any man in his senses doubt it? Is it rational to believe that with a work of responsibility so stupendous as that of instructing all nations to the end of time, committed to them—to them *alone*—the apostles would not have forthwith proceeded to execute the *only* means whereby they could fulfil their mission? That mission had not been fulfilled, had any number of them, short of the twelve, undertaken and completed and sent forth, without the supervision and authorisation of the remainder, a narrative of their Master's birth, journeyings, sojournings, miracles, and doctrine. The exclusion of a single member had frustrated His arrangement, and made void His words. Hence the call for expedition was most urgent; the more especially as, having been forewarned of persecution, even to very death, they could not count upon the moment when they might be separated. Nor, yet, did their Lord allow them to be lulled into false security. In the very first year of the church, he admonishes them by the seizing of Peter and John. In the second year, the whole of them are thrown into prison, miraculously delivered, laid in hold, again, and beaten—escaping worse treatment, through the counsel of Gamaliel. In the third year, the

stoning of Stephen, followed by "a great persecution," gives rise to such a panic in the church that was in Jerusalem, that "they were all scattered "abroad, throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, "except the apostles." Up to this period, we receive no hint, whatsoever, that any one of the apostles had departed from Jerusalem; and, now, while the whole of the flock is scattered, they *continue* there.

Years ago, I was struck with this startling contrast between the conduct of the apostles, and that of their disciples. I tried to account for it, but could not. I examined the foot notes of the bible which I was reading, but they were silent. I found comments upon passages, here and there, in the text; but none with reference to this most remarkable one; and, consequently, concluded that what appeared to be inexplicable to the learned commentator must, for ever, remain in the dark, as far as I was concerned—though as I thought, there existed an imperative call for explanation. The more frequently I recurred to the text, the more my perplexity increased, and the further off seemed the chance of removing it. I bless my God and Redeemer that He has mercifully put an end to all perplexity upon this subject—so far at least as I am concerned—by suggesting, to my mind, the great fact, in prosecuting the exposition of which I have arrived, through His help, at a solution which, much as it must have been felt to be demanded, seems, never-

theless—as far as I know—to have hitherto remained unattempted.*

* I have since ascertained that this was a mistake. It has been attempted by Matthew Henry and by Archdeacon Townson, and probably by other commentators; Scott I find has not touched upon the subject. Matthew Henry remarks: “*The preachers were all scattered.*” Why does he write “the preachers,” when scripture tells us that the whole church—such as could escape—were scattered; and went everywhere, preaching the word? Had Matthew Henry a leaning to priestcraft? He proceeds, “except the apostles, who, probably, were directed by the Spirit to continue at Jerusalem, yet, for some time; they being, by the special providence of God, screened from the storm, and by the special providence of God enabled to face the storm.” How came they, at one and the same time, to be “screened from the storm and to face the storm?” He continues. “They tarried at Jerusalem, that they might be ready to go where their assistance was most needed by the other preachers, that were *sent* to break the ice, as Christ ordered his disciples to go to those places where he himself designed to come.” Again I ask, Had Matthew Henry a leaning to priestcraft? “Sent to break the ice!” as if those who went everywhere preaching the word stood in need of a licence!—as if those who had imbibed the instruction of the apostles durst not preach what they had been taught, without formal authorisation! And the apostles remained at Jerusalem, “that they might be ready to go where their assistance was most needed by the other preachers!” That object would have been far more effectually accomplished by accompanying the preachers. They had, then, been at hand to assist them. This, at the best, is but a bungling attempt to account for the conduct of the apostles; and Henry himself betrays his consciousness of the fact, remarking, “The apostles continued longer together at Jerusalem than one would have thought, considering the command and commission given them to go into all the world, and to disciple all nations.” What, if it were in obedience to that commission and command that they remained where

But why do the apostles remain in Jerusalem? They cannot now preach the word there. If the deacon, Stephen, incurred martyrdom—if Jerusalem was too hot for the common disciplehood to stay in it, how much more would the apostles have been obnoxious to the severest persecution had they ventured, now, to preach the word. But they might preach the word by flying from Jerusalem, as the church did; for the church, though scattered, preaches the word? Are the apostles *idling* at Jerusalem? Are they skulking there at the admonition of personal fear? The church is their flock! The flock is dispersed! Why do not the shepherds follow the flock? Why do they suffer the sheep to be scat-

they did? The apostles could give a far better account of the matter; and of that account, Archdeacon Townson seems to have a notion, though not so clear and positive a one as it might have been. He says, "When the great persecution of the church in Jerusalem began with the stoning of Stephen, all the chief members of it,"—"chief members." Priestcraft again! Where does he find the term "chief?" Assuredly not in the text. Where, then? But I interrupt him,—"were dispersed, except the apostles, who kept indeed their stations; but, the popular tide turning against them, could not be heard in public so attentively as before;"—could not be heard at all, would have been a statement somewhat nearer the fact:—"and then it became especially requisite to obviate the various aspersions and false reports of their adversaries, by providing a plain memorial of what Christ had done and taught, and what the witnesses of his life and doctrine taught in his name." This amounts almost to an assertion, that the apostles remained at Jerusalem, with the view of keeping together, till the finishing hand should be put to a conjoint record of their Master's ministry.

tered by the wolf without making the least attempt to look after them? Why did the flock fly? For safety. Could not the shepherds, also, have fled for safety? Had they not their Master's authority for such a proceeding? "When they persecute you in "this city, flee ye into another." Why do they not take the road which their Lord pointed out to them? But what had been the certain consequence of their departing from Jerusalem? They must have been scattered as well as the flock. To have travelled in a body through Judea, in every region of which they were known as the constant companions of Jesus, might have exposed the whole apostlehood to extinction at one blow. To follow the flock, in one body, was impossible; for the flock had taken different ways, and consequently *they* must have taken different ways. Hence, in either case, they must have separated—whether for the object of following the flock, or of preserving their own lives. What kept them, then, in Jerusalem? Their duty. How was their remaining in Jerusalem connected with their duty? It enabled them to continue *together*. What was the nature of that duty? The placing beyond all hazard of loss, or corruption, in case of their undergoing a violent death, as Stephen had done, or of being removed by any other species of persecution, the details of their Master's ministry. How? By conjointly and formally recording those details. What record, among the *apostolic* writings,

presents us, fully, with the characteristics of such an instrument? The gospel assigned to Matthew. That gospel was, beyond all question, the work upon which they were employed during this interval of most appalling danger. I may defy human ingenuity to divine any other cause, which will justify the conduct of the apostles. Nay, it is not irreverent to conjecture, that the severe persecution which then took place was permitted by the Lord with the view, besides other ends, of releasing the apostles from the care of the church; that they might devote the whole of their time to the infinitely more important object for which they had been originally associated, and the accomplishing of which constituted the exclusive subject of His final command—the instructing of mankind, as long as the human race should last.

But was not Jerusalem the grand centre of danger? Granted. How, then, could the apostles select that city as the locality most conducive to their safety? Because, being densely populated, there existed, there, the greater chance of concealment, and consequently of being undisturbed in their work. Besides, from their innocent, inoffensive, and charitable lives during a residence of nearly three years, they must have formed, even among the unconverted, friends, who from motives of generosity and compassion would be induced to shelter them, and might do so with least suspicion. But, independently of such a resource,

were they not sure of refuge from some among the great and powerful, many of whom, as we are told by John, believed in the Lord, although, through fear of being expelled from the synagogue, they did not confess Him, openly? Surely, to some one or another of these they would have communicated their intention of abiding where they were, as well as the cause which rendered such a measure necessary; and, as surely, a retreat in Jerusalem would be provided for them, where they might enjoy immunity from hindrance or molestation. Security with companionship was what they coveted—not for the exclusive sake of preserving their lives, but for that of perfecting the work to the performance of which the presence of the whole brotherhood was essential—an inference which, of themselves, they could not fail to draw from various declarations and injunctions of their Master. *They* were to “bind and loose;” *they* were to “remit and retain;” “their word” was to be the medium through which mankind should be led to believe in the Lord; *they* were to be sent into the world; *they* were to “bear witness” with the Holy Ghost; *they* were to “teach all nations till the end of the world.” The *whole* of them; not an *individual or two* of their number, but the *whole* number.

Allusions to the first of the Gospels are to be found in some of the Epistles, and of such a nature as to establish the proposition that it is to be received as the joint testimony of the Apostles.

Now, though, from the internal evidence of the gospel assigned, exclusively, to Matthew, the truth that it is the joint record of the whole apostlehood is incontrovertibly evident, inasmuch as, to suppose that the “discipling,” which all were commanded to work out till the end of time, should be conducted by a single member of the body, can be nothing less than to neutralize the words of our blessed Lord—or to believe them capable of *passing away*; nevertheless, it may be argued that the existence of such co-operation is rendered questionable by the silence of the rest of Scripture, with reference to so important a fact; for nothing short of important—and eminently so—is the fact that the whole of the apostlehood, and not merely one of them, is present in the gospel which has been assigned exclusively to that single member; as in the latter case, Scripture is broken, whereas in the former, its integrity is maintained. Such silence, however, is *imaginary*. In the succeeding *apostolic* writings, the existence of a *common* record is distinctly alluded to, and more than once—a circumstance which seems to have escaped the research of theologians, through the darkness which, in more cases than one, pernicious tradition has succeeded in casting over the sacred

page. Both Paul, and Peter, and Jude refer to the first gospel; and as the testimony of the whole original brotherhood—a fact that, conclusively, denies the credit which Matthew has hitherto received, as the exclusive author of that writing.

Paul alludes to the first Gospel in terms which prove that he regards it as a record of the whole brotherhood.

Paul writes, Eph. ii. 20, “Ye, &c., are built “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” He writes again, Eph. iii. 1—6, “For this cause, I, “Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you gentiles, “if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace “of God which is given me to you-ward; how that “by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; “(as I wrote afore in few words, whereby ye may “understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) “which in other ages was not made known unto “the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the “holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the “gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same “body, &c.” In both these instances, the term “prophets” is applied, by Paul, to the apostles, to denote the fact of their being inspired—not as “the “sons of men,” the prophets, “in other ages,” were inspired—the *promise*, only, of Christ having been revealed to the latter, whereas, to the former, was revealed the *performance* of that promise. Supposing that Mark and Luke had written before the date of

Ephesians; still it is manifest, from Paul's language, that he had not, in view, the writings of those evangelists; inasmuch as it would have been contrary to fact, to include them in the brotherhood of *the* apostles. Neither could he have had in view the apostolic epistles—only one of which, that of James—was composed at the time. Nay, had the *whole* of them been composed, at the time, they would not have corresponded with Paul's description of the evidence to which he alludes. “As it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body.” This is manifestly announced in the gospel assigned to Matthew, where Isaiah is quoted, “Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; “my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I “will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show “judgment to the gentiles. He shall not strive, nor “cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the “streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and “smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send “forth judgment to victory. And in his name shall “the gentiles trust.” This, the apostles, directed by the Spirit, quote, by way of comment, when they repeat the charge of Christ to those whom he had healed, “that they should not make him known.” Now, as we have the most valid reasons for believing that none of the original brotherhood had ever preached to the Ephesians, and as Paul declares that

church to have been built upon that brotherhood; and, unquestionably would not have done so had he not known that the Ephesians were thoroughly acquainted with all which that brotherhood taught—not by the report of Paul, but by a duplicate of the record, prepared by the apostles themselves—it follows that the church of the Ephesians must have been in possession of such an instrument, and that that instrument could have been no other than the gospel which has been assigned to Matthew.

The light in which Scripture authorises us to regard the Epistles of Paul.

And what are the writings of Paul, himself, if we abstract the first of the gospels? In such a case to what would his witness amount? Does he relate the miracles of Christ? Does he rehearse his various discourses, in Christ's *own words*? Could the work, to which Christ appointed him have been carried on without the apostles? No! Could the apostles, without him, have performed the same work, had it so pleased Christ? Yes, beyond all question. True, he was an apostle, "not of men, neither by "men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father"—a man *directly sent* by Christ and the Father; true, he had been instructed by the Lord himself; true, he had been "caught up to the third heaven," and there had "heard unspeakable words which it is not

“ lawful for a man to utter;” but, notwithstanding all these circumstances, he could not claim to be an eye and ear witness of Christ, while Christ was *in the flesh*. The whole writings of Paul, as regards their essence, may be reduced to what we read in the gospel assigned to Matthew, and cannot possibly be viewed in any other light than as a series of dissertations illustrative of the truths that are therein proclaimed.

Paul would have preached in vain without the evidence of the apostles to appeal to, in instructing the churches which he founded. Did he neglect to provide himself, or those whom he instructed, with such evidence? Did he under-rate such evidence? or, rather, on the contrary, did he not attach to it an importance, nothing short of vital? Christ, himself, had instructed him in the full particulars of the Lord’s supper, establishing its exclusively commemorative character—a circumstance omitted in the gospel assigned to Matthew; but, doubtless, from its being most obviously inferrible from the very nature of the rite. Now, how would Paul’s relation of the occurrence have been affected, had not those who had actually witnessed it, taken care to record it? Say that the Lord himself had communicated to Paul the *whole* events of His ministry, as recited in the primitive gospel, still there would have been wanting the corroboration with which He condescended to provide himself in the presence of human witnesses who

should attend Him, constantly. The miracles which Paul could work could not possible compensate for the absence of such proof. The original apostlehood could work miracles too, but, along with that supernatural power, enjoyed the paramount advantage of having actually heard the doctrine and seen the events which, in vision only, could have been revealed to Paul. They, consequently, stood upon ground which it was utterly out of the power of Paul to occupy ; and could the gentile apostle have been blind to this fact ? As, therefore, the first apostolic record *must* have been completed before the year 36, when Paul, after his miraculous conversion, first went up to Jerusalem, it is wholly inconsistent with our appreciation of common apprehension, to doubt that he took care to provide himself with a duplicate of that record ; and to make copies of that duplicate, or cause them to be made, if not for his own benefit, for that, most assuredly, of the churches which he was about to found. It was a proceeding altogether indispensable, and which he himself proves to have taken place.

Paul appeals again to the Gospel assigned to Matthew, establishing it to be the joint testimony of the special apostlehood.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, ii. 3, Paul writes, “ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the

" Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that
" heard him?"

Here Paul manifestly alludes to a transaction long past ; the result of which remains, and is accessible to him, as well as to those whom he addresses. Have we not the first of the gospels here ? Is it rational to question that there exists an allusion to it here ? He writes, " was confirmed unto us by them that " heard Him." Confirmation implies the very highest species of evidence, and the very highest species of evidence is *written* evidence. The preaching of any one of the apostles, while the rest stood by, giving countenance to the truth of what he taught, might be regarded as amounting to confirmation, but only to those whom he was addressing. The mere *report* of what had passed would come short of confirmation. There ever exists more or less of question, in the case of mere hearsay evidence ; and, moreover, by what hearsay evidence *could the contents of the first gospel have been communicated ?* There we have in full the " so great salvation which at the first began " to be spoken by the Lord." How could this have been carried, here and there, in full, by hearsay communication ? Even at the present day our missionary societies, and their agents, knowing that the human mind will not be satisfied with the mere *account* of what is written in the book, take care, at the cost of enormous pains and outlay, to provide the book *itself*. Were the apostles less awake to the

obvious necessity of such a measure? If the apostles thought that their oral teaching would suffice, why did they write? If they wrote, wherefore write, if not to distribute, as far and wide as possible? Have we not here, from the pen of Paul, the proof that such distribution had taken place? Have we not also, here, the evidence that the first of the gospels was the voucher of the whole peculiar apostlehood? Had it been exclusively the work of Matthew, Paul most assuredly would not have failed to attribute to him the high honour to which he was entitled. In that case Paul must have written, "confirmed unto *us* by *one* of them that heard him," if he had not absolutely named the apostle; and not "confirmed unto *us* by *them* that heard him"—which would have been nothing less than an act of robbery in Paul. The gospel, attributed to Matthew, is as manifestly indicated, in the text of the gentile apostle, as language can render it. Even in our courts, from the lowest to the highest, evidence, in any material case, is not complete, until it has been reduced to writing. Not till then, is it *confirmed*, so that all who are interested, may have access to it, with *reliance*.

Paul defers to the evidence of the primitive apostlehood.

And, now, mark how Paul, writing in the Spirit, acknowledges the paramount authority of this gospel. He says, "confirmed unto *us*"—not unto *you*, but

“unto *us*.”* He descends—places himself upon a level with those whom he teaches—in acknowledging the respect which is due, by *him*, as well as by them, to the instructions of the select original brotherhood. Though, in other places he affirms that, with reference to the authenticity of his mission, and his fitness for it—for he cannot possibly ground what he says upon anything else—he is not *a whit behind* the chiefest apostles; still, here, he places them *above* himself in the advantage which they enjoyed as the appointed eye and ear witnesses of our Lord’s ministry, and bows to their *confirmation* of the things the utterance of which they had heard from his own lips, while he “dwelt among us” in the flesh.

That Scripture, alone, is confirmation—is superior to oral evidence, by whomsoever borne—is manifestly

* Thus, the apostle himself rebukes those visionary theologians who would persuade us that Paul, and not Matthias, was the rightful successor of Judas Iscariot. Experience, similar to that of Judas, previous to his fall, was a qualification which, as regarded the man who should take his place, was absolutely indispensable. There is a light in which the mission of Paul has yet to be viewed. If, as Paul declares, Peter, James, and John went to the circumcision, it is reasonable to conclude that the rest of the apostles restricted themselves to the same field of operation. It was fit that the work should be known to be of God, and not of men. *Several* labourers are sent to the harvest of the Jews and Hellenists—the latter scattered, far and wide, among the Gentiles—and yet little is recorded of their success; while one is only sent to the heathen, and prospers, mightily. It is not without a reason that Paul was prompted to disparage himself, by recording the detrac-tive estimation in which his qualifications, as a preacher, were held by his enemies.

asserted by this apostle, where he writes, " all Scripture is given by inspiration." He does not mean to deny inspiration to the word-of-mouth teaching of holy men, but to be understood as regarding the committing of what they teach to writing, as the most unquestionable evidence of their claim to inspiration—as every man binds himself, more conclusively by what he writes than by what he speaks. Here Paul has in view, not so much the letter of the Old Testament, as that of the New; so far as that letter had been executed, or might be executed, thereafter. And this is evident from the introduction of the term "all," by employing which he clearly demonstrates that it is not the Old Testament alone which he means to indicate; the inspiration of which was already established without his help. And let it be remembered that at this period the gospel assigned to Matthew was the only one that can be positively affirmed to have been completed, so as to afford time for its general distribution; as the date of the Hebrews is the year 63, whereas Mark is said to have composed his gospel at Rome, between the years 60 and 65, and the date assigned to that of Luke is the year 63 or 64.

Peter alludes to the first Gospel as the common witness of the peculiar brotherhood.

In 1 Peter i. 12, we find the gospel assigned to Matthew. " Unto whom"—the prophets—" it was

“revealed that, not unto themselves, but unto us
“they minister the things which are now repo
“unto you, by them that have preached the gos
—the word of God—“unto you, with the I
“Ghost sent down from heaven.” Here Peter
tributes the preaching of the gospel—the wor
God—to the instrumentality of several persons
ferentially including himself—which is not by
means denied in consequence of his using the pl
pronoun of the third person—“them.” He
James, and no doubt the rest of the peculiar brot
hood, “went to the circumcision.” Had he emplo
the plural pronoun of the first person, “we”—wh
in the epistles, is indifferently used to denote pl
lity or unity—without coupling with it a term i
cative of plurality—as “we,” *the apostles* or *witn*
—it might have been doubtful whether he was sp
ing of himself, alone, or in conjunction with otl
Now, that Peter contemplates the whole of the sp
brotherhood with reference to the first of the gos
is indisputably established by the last verse of
chapter, “But the word of the Lord endureth
“ever; and this is the word, which, by the go
“is preached unto you.” Wherefore, as “the v
“of the Lord” is the gospel, the question aris
“How could the gospel be preached by the gosp
The medium and the thing conveyed cannot poss
be regarded as *one and the same* thing. The go
therefore, by which the word of God is here decl

to be preached, must necessarily be the record assigned to Matthew. Though the apostle writes in the year 64 he cannot have any other record in view, as, by no ingenuity, whatsoever, of sophistry itself, can the term which he uses be converted into a noun of multitude.

Another reference of Peter to the first Gospel as the common witness.

Peter writes again (2 Ep. i. 16), "For we have "not followed cunningly devised fables, when we "made known unto you the power and coming of "our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of "his majesty." Here, the apostle contemplates evidence which must have been accessible to the whole of those whom he addresses, as, otherwise, his vindication of it would be useless; and that evidence could not have been other than the record of our Lord's ministry, as related in the gospel assigned to Matthew—the miracles recounted in which he has in view as the things in stating which he and his brethren had not "followed cunningly devised "fables." And in the following verse he instances one of those miracles as the most majestic, and in which he has a peculiar interest, having been specially privileged, with Peter and John, to witness it; "For he received from God the Father honour and "glory, when there came such a voice to him from "the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in "whom I am well pleased.'" This was an occur-

rence, familiarity with which, on the part of all those whom he addresses, is clearly implied ; and such familiarity could alone proceed from their being in possession of the writing in which the incident had been recorded. He now proceeds to back the witnesses of the apostles by appealing to what was prophesied of Christ, "We have also a more sure "word of prophecy;" how "more sure?" Because longer established, and *universally* assented to by the Jews—"whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as "unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the "day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." The light of the prophets shineth in a dark place, the heart of the unconverted, until, through faith, that the "more sure word of prophecy" is fulfilled in Christ, "the day dawn and the day-star arise" therein. He concludes, "Knowing this first, that "no prophecy of the scripture," the "more sure "word of prophecy," "is of any private interpreta- "tion ; for the prophecy came not of old time by the "will of man, but holy men of God spake as they "were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Peter establishes the fact that it is written, and not oral, evidence to which he has been all along appealing.

The language in which Peter commences the third chapter of his second epistle clearly demonstrates that he has the common written evidence of the apostles in view, and that such evidence is to be *found in the gospel ascribed to Matthew* (2 Peter iii.

1), "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken, before, by the holy prophets; and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

Here we have again to thank pernicious tradition for the darkness which, throughout so many centuries, appears to have enveloped a text, so plain that he who runs may read. This text alone ought to have opened the eyes of theologians as to the fact that the New Testament must contain the joint written testimony of the whole peculiar apostlehood, and ought to have led them to search for such a document. What have we here, if not the gospel assigned to Matthew, placed congenially side by side with the writings of the Old Testament, and distinctly declared to be the voucher of Peter himself, along with the whole of his brethren? It does not consist with common apprehension to believe that Peter, here, has the oral personal teaching of the apostles in view—that, for a moment he could think of placing *word of mouth* evidence and *written evidence* side by side; or that he means to include any other labours of the sacred pen—granted that such a work is indicated. It *must* be such a work—one that is formal and complete—every way worthy of being classed with the *writings* of the prophets; so that in the former instance, as well as in the latter, it was within the

power of every individual among those whom addresses, to inform and satisfy himself, if he could by ocular investigation — though, by the different process of multiplying by manuscript, copies of document could have been confided to the custody of only a few — such as the elders of the different bodies of Jewish proselytes. In both cases Peter was figuratively. By the phrase, “the words spoken by the holy prophets,” he means their *written words* and by the phrase, “the commandment of us, ‘apostles,’ he means the instrument whereby *command* of their Lord to teach all nations been put into execution. Such an instrument recognised, *alone*, in the gospel assigned to Matthew, where the *whole* doctrine of Christ is to be found originally recorded — all the subsequent writing the New Testament consisting of repetitions of doctrine, or containing precepts, congenial with the pith and marrow of which is therein to be found. By means of that gospel were the apostles *already* teaching in divers localities where it was impossible for them to be personally present; James, who suffered martyrdom twenty years before, working along with them. Apprehending the scope of the blessed Saviour’s parting command, “Go ye ‘teach all nations,’ &c., but strangely blind to the only means by which it could be carried out, tradition has endeavoured to establish its fulfilment in a *hearsay* description of the personal labours of

apostles in different quarters of the world ; though, without taking into account the impediment of their poverty and the difficulty with which at the period in which they lived, transportation from place to place could be effected ; a moment's reflection might have suggested the impossibility of their visiting in the *whole* of their lifetime, far more in a *portion* of it, the various localities of any one of its principal divisions. Moreover, the mission of the apostles was to endure till the end of time ; and, consequently, could be accomplished by no other means than that which the prophets employed, and whereby they still speak to the world,—the pen.

It cannot be supposed that the epistle of James, though bearing the date 61, is contemplated by Peter ; as scripture contains no *declaration* that this writing was the result of *command*. Neither can he allude to those of Jude and John, which were written after the date at which he himself wrote, far less to Revelation and the Gospel of John, which were written some thirty years after the martyrdom of Peter. Neither can it be supposed that he has the gospels of Mark and Luke in view, as those writings, if indeed they were complete at the time, were yet too recent to have been generally distributed by duplicates, and as their authors did not belong to the special, but to the common, disciplehood, and nowhere receive the title of “apostles,” even in the generic sense. Neither

can it be supposed that the epistles of Paul are included, as, by his own words, Paul himself is excluded from the select apostlehood, denying all share in the *confirming* of “the great salvation which first “began to be spoken by the Lord;”—classing himself with those whom he addresses as a *recipient* of that confirmation. What then remains of the New Testament to account for the language of Peter? Nothing except the gospel which has been assigned to Matthew; but which Peter here manifestly ascribes to himself, along with Matthew and the rest of the brotherhood; the joint co-operation of whom is established by the internal evidence of the work itself.

Else, why do we find the chosen disciplehood in company continually with their blessed Lord? Wherefore does he always charge them *collectively*? Upon one occasion alone he *seems* to honour exclusively a single member of the body, where he promises the keys to Peter and explains their use to him; “Whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be “bound in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on “earth shall be loosed in heaven.” But in the next chapter but one he makes the same gift to the whole brotherhood, “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye “shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and “whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed “in heaven.” Thus the whole apostlehood receive the keys, as without them binding and loosing would

be impracticable ; the keys are the gospel, and the gospel is committed to the charge of every member of the chosen. By the all-foreseeing providence of God did it occur that only one of them could write, and that the penman should have been Matthew. Had it been Peter, what a handle had been afforded to Rome for propagating the damnable heresy of Peter's headship ; who, from his characteristic ambition and presumption, amiable and holy too as he was in other respects, would have, most probably, arrogated to himself the right of employing the pen had he been capable, *at the time*, of holding it. In the fortieth verse of the tenth chapter we read, "Who receiveth you receiveth me." Can these words be restricted to the peculiar occasion with reference to which our blessed Redeemer employed them ? Do they not refer to all time to come ? Are they not understood in the last command, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c. ? Is it not manifest, here, that those who receive the teaching of the apostles receive the apostles themselves, and in receiving them receive Christ ? Is it only *one* of the apostles that is here commanded to teach, and whose teaching being received he is himself received, and Christ in him ? Is Matthew, whose name is only written twice in the record which has been assigned to him—is he entitled to be regarded as that singly and most signally honoured individual ? Is it fit that he should stand solitarily prominent in the

foreground while the beloved disciple waits upon him at a distance, James, Peter, and Jude attend still farther behind, and the remaining six are not suffered to present themselves at all ! Tradition has arranged it so ! Nay, thanks be to God, scripture, in defiance and rebuke of tradition, brings the whole into view and places them side by side ; ranging them—like the brethren that they were commanded to be, and have continued to be, for eighteen centuries—upon a footing of strict equality ; that they might discharge together a trust, the most glorious and responsible that had ever been committed to the fidelity of a body of men—a trust, with a view to which they had been originally united ; of the nature of which Christ had fully apprised them ; towards executing which—that no item of doctrine might be overlooked—he promised them the Holy Ghost as their superintendent, and which constituted the all-momentous theme of his last solemn injunction when he was upon the very point of returning to the Father that had sent him.

Jude alludes to the gospel, assigned to Matthew, as the record of the Twelve.

It is manifestly the gospel assigned to Matthew, which Jude has in view, where he writes, “ But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ; “ how they told you that there should be mockers in

“the last time.” It is the teaching of the apostles *collectively* which is indicated here—teaching in which Jude himself had co-operated, and to which he is aware that the mass, whom he addresses, must have had access, and could at any time refer. It is not the personal instructions of the apostles which Jude has in view; inasmuch as it is impossible that those, whom he addresses, could have been taught by them, in a body. And mark, here, the difference between the language of this apostle, and that of Paul. Paul says, “confirmed unto *us*,” including himself. Jude, excluding himself, says, “How that they told “*you*.” He had *contributed* in warning them against “mockers;” and this fact is not rendered doubtful by his introducing the apostles in the *third person*. The mockers to whom he alludes are found at the fifteenth verse, seventh chapter, of the gospel assigned to Matthew; and in the same gospel we meet with them again, at the fifth, eleventh, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, and twenty-sixth verses of the twenty-fourth chapter. No objection can be started on the ground that these several texts consist of words, spoken by Christ, and not by the apostles. Christ says, “Neither pray I for these, alone, but “for them, also, which shall believe on me through “*their* word.” John xvii. 20.

Co-operation in constructing the first of the gospels demonstratively proved by the internal evidence of the record.

When we examine the gospel assigned to Matthew it is not until we arrive at the ninth verse of the ninth chapter that we meet with the call of this apostle. How, then, could Matthew possibly have been the *sole* author of the record? Will it be answered that, for the most part, historians have not witnessed the events which they narrate? I answer that, in the instance before us, eye and ear knowledge of the things that were said, and of the acts that were performed, was absolutely indispensable on the part of him who should recount them. Matthew could not pretend to such knowledge in constructing the first eight chapters of this gospel. Thousands of miracles had been performed while Matthew was yet daily sitting at the receipt of custom, and during that time one of the most voluminous and comprehensive discourses that was ever delivered by the Lord had been pronounced by him. In this latter instance, especially, the assistance of the Holy Ghost, himself, could not have availed the apostle, as the agency of the Spirit was expressly restricted to the office of recalling to the minds of the apostles all things whatsoever their Lord had said to them. The sermon on the mount could not have been *recalled* to the mind of Matthew, as Matthew, so far from listening to it,

is busy, sitting at the receipt of custom. The words, therefore, of this sublime oration, which flies enhancement from human lips, howsoever wrought with the fire of eloquence, must have been dictated to Matthew while in the company of his ethren, he was employed in setting them down. The fact of co-operation being thus so far established, I ask if it is reasonable to believe that those who must have been present at the commencement of a work in which all were equally interested, could not have continued to watch it, in its progress, till it arrived at completion.

The argument not affected by the fact that the other apostles had not witnessed certain early events of their Master's life.

Neither in the gospel assigned to Matthew nor in that of John, do we meet with an account of any miracle which Christ performed before the call of Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Nathanael, Bartholomew; all of whom John states to have been present at Cana, when the water was changed to wine. It cannot, surely, be argued that, in these respects Matthew stood upon an equal footing with his brethren, because they, as well as he, had not witnessed the events that preceded our Lord's entrance upon his ministry—His birth, the adoration of the magi, flight into Egypt, temptation? Here the whole apostlehood may be supposed to have stood upon a level. Here they had doubtless

their God and Master for their instructor ; and, thus far, Matthew, with the assistance of the Spirit, might have constructed by himself the gospel which has been assigned to him. But our blessed Lord's own relation of the miracles which he had performed before the call of Matthew could not have constituted the apostle an eye-witness of those works, neither could his repeating to him, word by word, the sermon on the mount have established him a member of the audience before whom it was delivered, which, to the perfecting of Matthew's relation, was essential. And, further, who were the witnesses of the transfiguration ? " Peter, James, and John his brother." Did not our blessed Lord fore-ordain that Matthew should write the gospel, which has been attributed to him as its exclusive author, and, if he intended him to be such, would he not have selected him as one of the spectators ? What was the express injunction which the favoured three received from Christ on this occasion ? " Tell the vision to *no* man, until "the Son of man be risen again from the dead." Moses and Elias appear ; the human nature of Christ vanishes, for the time, behind a veil of celestial glory ; and that, again, is " overshadowed by a "bright cloud," from which the voice of the Father, issuing, casts the beholders, in dread and rapt admiration, on their faces to the ground. For this event, transcending in miraculous magnificence every

other incident in our Saviour's ministry, have we been provided with no other direct evidence than that of an apostle who was not present when it took place? Even for the sake of the disciples our blessed Lord, in this instance, took care to supply himself with *more witnesses than one*; and, from the lips of one of them, while the two that had accompanied him stood attestingly by, and in the presence of the rest, did Matthew, beyond all reasonable question, set down the particulars of the surpassingly sublime and nature-overpowering vision.

In scripture we meet with councils of the apostles and councils of the church at large. By a council of the church at large is the order of deacons established, the visit of Peter to Cornelius approved, the freedom of the Gentile converts from the rite of circumcision proclaimed. By a council of the apostles was it determined that Peter and John should be sent as missionaries into Samaria. Was the grand record sent into the world without a council of the apostles? did it not issue from such a council? a standing council, adjourned from time to time as occasion demanded, and resumed as occasion permitted? Weigh the stupendous responsibility of such a work, and judge how inadequate to that responsibility would have been the exclusive performance of a solitary individual, even allowing for the superintendence of the Holy Ghost. Judge if Matthew, admonished as he must have been by the

parting words of Christ, whereby our Lord most clearly indicated that every one of the apostles was appointed to instruct mankind to the end of the world; judge, I say, if a man so circumstanced would have dared to take upon himself the task of constructing, without the privity of the rest, the instrument whereby alone instruction for such a duration of time could possibly be carried out. Judge if the Holy Ghost would have assisted him in an undertaking whereby the words of Christ would be rendered void and a robbery would be committed upon the other apostles; "Go ye and teach all "nations; and lo! I am with you alway to the end of "the world." Not more positively did our blessed Lord foretel the destruction of Jerusalem before the generation of the time at which he spoke should have passed away, than in these words he foretold that *every one* of those to whom they were addressed, should continue to teach for all succeeding time; and not less surely is the latter prediction now progressing towards fulfilment, than the fulfilment of the former took place nearly eighteen hundred years ago.

In that record, then, to the doctrine set forth in which all the succeeding doctrine of the New Testament can be traced, we must necessarily have the teaching of the whole apostlehood. By scripture had Moses and the prophets completed their mission; except his miracles, to no other evidence.

than that of scripture did our blessed Lord appeal, in proof that he was the Messiah ; to scripture, alone, did the apostles, themselves, appeal to show that certain of its predictions were fulfilled in various events of our Saviour's ministry ; what, then, would have been the very first thought and care of the apostles but to commit to *writing* the testimony which they were commanded to bear ? The penman had been provided, and was at hand. With the utmost urgency for despatch, did his brethren neglect to employ him ? Equally responsible as they were for the most momentous trust that had ever been committed to human agency, did they leave it at his option to execute that trust by himself, complacently washing their hands of all further concern about it ? Impossible ! Their zeal, their fidelity, their regard for their own honour protest against their being chargeable with so scandalously gross a dereliction of duty. No ! They formed themselves into the most holy synod that ever sat in this world ; they began the work, and watched it to the end ; they dictated where the penman could not proceed by himself, in matters of which he had not been an eye and ear witness, and so far was disqualified for receiving the prompting of the Spirit ; portion after portion he repeated to them what he had set down, and, as he read from the parchment, they read, word for word, along with him, in their minds ; as the hand of the Holy Ghost

was renewing there, successively, in all their pristine vivid brightness, the traces of whatsoever they had heard from the lips of their Saviour and their

John's participation in preparing the Gospel assigned to Matthew is proved by the internal evidence of his own Gospel.

That John had co-operated in constructing the gospel which has been attributed to Matthew is clearly inferrible from the fact that, while several of the discourses and occurrences recorded there are repeated by Mark and Luke, who could not claim to be members of the special disciplehood, John, who belonged to it, confines himself in the greater portion of his gospel to the repetition of a single incident — the feeding of the five thousand — and presents it solely with the view of introducing a course of our blessed Lord's, which, in the instance, had been withheld; doubtless, because inasmuch as, on the part of many among the common disciplehood, it had led to murmuring and defection at the time; it was deemed inexpedient to recall it, together with its results, while the church was as yet in its infancy. John, now, in the year 96, when the church had grown strong, gives publicity to that which, in the year 32, he had agreed with his brethren in the expediency of withholding. The miracle at Cana too, which even in our own time has been not unfrequently appealed to, as a warrant for convivial indulgence; and the incident of the

ken in adultery, for certain reasons, as it is said, omitted by Eusebius, in that edition of the Greek Testament which Constantine commanded him to prepare for public use—both these instances, withheld at first, from prudential motives, were now presented to the church, when its infancy, whereon those motives were grounded, had passed away. Maria not having received the word when the first apostolic record was in hand, our Saviour's transactions there were suppressed, from the apparent contradiction that existed between his own practice and the command which he delivered to his apostles, not to enter into any city of the Samaritans. From motives of consideration, all allusion to Nicodemus; to the man whose eyes had been opened, though he had been blind from his birth; and to Lazarus, was avoided. All those persons being alive at the time, the relating of incidents in which they acted so conspicuous a part, would have pointed them out to the Rulers and Pharisees as objects peculiarly obnoxious to persecution. After a lapse of sixty years, all chance of hazard was removed, and these incidents appear in the record of John. In John, too, we meet, for the first time, with the fact, that the brethren of Jesus—the sons whom Mary subsequently bore to Joseph—did not believe in him; and are further informed that they were so destitute of fraternal solicitude, as to urge him to go up to the feast, though, as they must have known, Jerusa-

lem, of all places, was that in which he would be exposed to greatest danger. But now belief had superseded unbelief; now those brethren were working with the apostles—as we learn from Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 5,—and consequently, lest their labours should suffer prejudice, the apostles abstained from all allusion to their previous heartlessness and want of faith; so much so, that they abridge a saying of Christ's which Mark records in full. In the gospel assigned to Matthew, we read, "A prophet is not 'without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.' " Here, the phrase, "his own house," might be said to include relations in the various degrees of affinity; but Mark restricts it to those of the paternal roof-tree. "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house," Christ founds this saying upon his own experience, as the context indisputably proves, and consequently here alludes to the brethren—the other sons of Mary—who did not believe on him, and, moreover, had treated him uncharitably. From a similar motive, those three appearances of Christ to his apostles after his resurrection, which have been recorded by John, were passed over in the first instance; as to have recorded them might have done prejudice to the ministry of Thomas and Peter. That of all the disciples Peter alone should have been thrice made the object of reproach; should have required to be thrice ad-

monished on the score of fidelity in feeding his Master's flock—his need of which emphatic enjoining he wofully demonstrated at Antioch—and, what was worse, that, through jealousy of the beloved disciple, he should have incurred the rebuke of his Master; were matters ill calculated to exalt him in the estimation of the infant church, and which John himself, perhaps, had not recorded, had he not foreseen the use that Antichrist would make of that apostle. And yet, what a lying gloss has Antichrist endeavoured to cast over one of these transactions—the charge to feed the sheep—representing Peter as an object of exclusive trust and honour, where, in point of fact, he was the subject of question and reproach! Thomas, along with the rest of the disciples, had been forewarned of the resurrection; and yet, though assured by his brethren that it had taken place, and that they had seen the Lord; he incontinently doubts. This fact, so little redounding to his credit, for the sake of that credit, is, in the first instance, withheld; but John, after the lapse of sixty years, having no motive for concealing it, records it now, for the benefit of the church through all succeeding time,—that benefit, most obvious, as it is, from the words of our blessed Lord:—“Blessed are they that have not ‘seen, and yet have believed,’”—admonishment and encouragement for all posterity! The discourse that our blessed Lord addressed to his disciples at the last supper, and on his way to the garden of Gethsemane,

was omitted, in the first instance, because it directly relates to the duty and functions of the apostles, who, while they were alive, required no proof of the genuineness of their mission, or of their capability of discharging it, beyond stating the command of their Lord, to teach all nations for all succeeding time; backed as that statement was by the power of working miracles. But when the whole of them, except John, had been removed, and John himself was about to quit the world; it seemed good to the Holy Spirit that that discourse should be now recorded for future instruction and satisfaction, as to the most eminently ample qualifications of the glorious brotherhood, when the evidence of external signs was no longer deemed necessary, and believers were to live by faith alone.

The object of John, in writing his gospel, was not solely that of refuting the Gnostics.

That John had the system of the Gnostics in view, when he wrote his gospel, though clearly established by his employing terms which are found, alone, in their works; nevertheless it is manifest that he aimed at a higher and more enduring end,—the restoring of matters which had been originally left out, and the knowledge of which would interest the church, without altering or adding to the doctrine which it had already received; and the confounding of other heretical sects. This we may deduce

from his words in the second chapter of his first epistle, eighteenth verse, "Even now, are there many Antichrists." With regard to the united divinity and manhood, the doctrine and offices of the Lord, he does not add so much as a jot to what we find in the gospel attributed to Matthew. All things relating to our blessed Redeemer are embodied there, in the confession of Peter, speaking for himself and his brethren, "Thou art the Christ, "the Son of the living God." Jesus, setting his seal to this stupendous fact, appropriates to himself all that was predicted of him in the Old Testament, where we find him God as well as man ; and trace, clearly defined, in reiterated prophecy, the whole character and accidents of his ministry, from his miraculous birth to his death and resurrection. In support of the grand fundamental proposition, John has recorded other discourses of our blessed Lord, but not one jot of other doctrine. Every assertion is rooted in what the Old Testament declares with regard to the advent of Christ.

The evidence upon which the gospel, assigned to Matthew, has been exclusively appropriated to that apostle is that of a single man—Papias ; nor does his evidence absolutely bear out the interpretation which has been put upon it, as it may merely relate, as I have stated before, to the fact that Matthew was the penman of the work. Will it be asked why the gospel was not introduced with a preamble, setting

forth the plurality of its authorship? I reply, would not such a proceeding have been an act of the merest supererogation, when the authors are found again and again, in the body of the work itself? Aware that Christ had refused his countenance to tradition, would not the infant church, who were taught, in the first instance, to look back, exclusively, to the old scriptures, look forward now to new scriptures; and by whom could they possibly expect that the work would be executed, except by the select constant witnesses of the Lord's life and doctrine? Did not the apostles, *personally*, commit the record to the church? Where, then, existed the demand for a written voucher to the effect, that they had co-operated, in constructing, and united, in issuing it?

The most unscriptural view, which, in consequence of what Papias has stated, the world, for so many centuries, has entertained respecting the authorship of this gospel, affords a signal instance of the danger which ever results from attaching to the evidence of mere tradition a grain of weight, where our spiritual interests are concerned. Our Lord and his apostles, one might imagine, had supplied us with beacons, enough, to ensure our giving the widest possible berth to this shoal of most disastrous shipwreck! Upon that shoal the Roman church, as regards the faith which scripture inculcates, has utterly gone to pieces. That church—the mistress of most damnable

heresies ; the priestess of revived idolatry, officiating in Christian guise ; “the mother of harlots,” by whose fleshly blandishment, bishop and pastor, and layman have been seduced from the Protestant faith, and either partially, or wholly, debauched ; the cunning pander to carnality, by a parade of supererogatory holiness, masking her real function ; the monster of truculence, protesting her innocence of the blood in which, again and again, she has steeped herself to the arm-pits, and with which she is begrimed all over,—that church pretending to be the sole inheritress and transmitter of apostolic unction, and, yet, denying, inadvertently, her claim to a fraction of it by confessing, that, for three hundred years she permitted, under her very nose, the circulation of spurious gospels and epistles ;—that church, only, at the close of the fourth century, settled, as she boasts, the canon of scripture—settled the canon, but usurped the custody of the life and soul of the canon, by arrogating to herself the right of interpreting it as she pleased ; as if what Christ commanded that all the world should be instructed in, and thereby virtually declared that all the world was capable of understanding ; and what his apostles accordingly committed to writing as the only means, under heaven, whereby the trust reposed in them—in them exclusively—could be executed ; was designed by him and them, to be limited to a contemptible handful of God’s creatures, for the purpose of esta-

blishing, in the name of God, the most insolent, unprincipled, and ruinous tyranny that ever enslaved mankind.

This church, ruling by tradition instead of scripture; consulting Papias and those who have servilely echoed him, instead of consulting the apostles themselves; ascribed to Matthew exclusively the authorship of a work, in constructing which, from its own internal evidence, and from a mass of collateral evidence, others as well as Matthew, must necessarily have been concerned. That the title which has been ever since attributed to it was unknown to the primitive church, I am as positively convinced, as I am of the present existence of that title. Having been committed to the church in the first instance by the hands of the apostles themselves, without any other voucher for its authorship; and *authorised* copies of it having been distributed among the several branches of that church; it was received with an absolute knowledge of its being the voucher of the whole special apostlehood. The establishing of its strictly apostolic origin was enough. In arranging the canon of the New Testament, the recognition of that origin had sufficed, and not being misled by the monstrously anti-scriptural belief, that the duty which the Almighty had committed to the charge of a numerous body of men, had been executed by only a single individual of the number, independently of

all consultation or authority, as regarded the rest ; the world would have, all along, entertained that view of this gospel, which, beyond all question, the primitive church entertained ; and the truth of which, through practising, with implicit faith, nothing wavering, that asking, seeking, and knocking, which our blessed Lord enjoined, with a positive promise of our receiving, finding, and having it opened to us—I most humbly, and, yet, most firmly, believe myself to have succeeded in establishing.

The proposition which I defend is unassailably based upon the infallibility of scripture. Scripture authorises us to expect the teaching of the whole peculiar disciplehood till the end of the world, and what scripture authorises us to expect must be fulfilled. It tells us what the whole of that disciplehood were to teach—namely, all things whatsoever the Lord had commanded. According to the view which has been hitherto taken of the New Testament, five, only, of that brotherhood have written ; of the works which they have left us, only two admit of being compared ; and of these two, one is, by far, the more comprehensive. In that work, not only the doctrine taught by the rest, but whatsoever is taught by the other writers of the New Testament, is to be found, either in essence or in form. Consequently that one work must contain all things whatsoever the Lord had commanded ; and, this being ascertained, and the whole peculiar disciple-

hood having been appointed to teach those things till the end of the world, and such a result being unattainable, except by the *independent* written testimony of each one of the apostles, or by the *conjoint* written testimony of the whole of them ; in the total absence of such independent testimony we are constrained by the honour that is due to the word of God, to embrace implicit belief in the existence of one common testimony, and to recognize that testimony in the gospel assigned to Matthew.

But how has it happened that a fact, the existence of which is most clearly indicated by scripture, has hitherto escaped the inquiry of theologians ? Tradition accounts for it. No sooner had the last of the apostles departed this life, than scripture began to be superseded by tradition. Hence the damnable dogmas of apostolic succession and an oral word of God—fictions which could, hardly, have been imposed upon mankind as truths, had the pastors of the second century pondered the parting words of Christ, and, under their direction, prosecuted the inquiry whether the whole of his doctrine was not forthcoming in scripture, and whether the whole of his apostles were not teaching it, there. But such a subject of research would have ill-consisted with the views of men, ambitious of stepping into the shoes of the apostles ; as it must have resulted in placing them upon a level with their flocks, both being equally amenable to one fixed and unalterable

standard of instruction. Where the conjoint teaching of the whole peculiar brotherhood was found, in scripture, the whole doctrine of the Lord was necessarily to be found, and, consequently, the prohibition of other doctrine and other teachers. Men who, though bodily removed from the world, were still instructing it in a full, conjoint, imperishable record, of their Master's doctrine, were wholly independent of successors, and precluded the shadow of a pretext for subscribing to any other word than that which had been set down by the pen.

Tradition began with Ignatius, who suffered martyrdom in the year 107; and who was ambitious of outdoing Paul, by coveting the lion's mouth, which the apostle was thankful for escaping, for a time. This so-called father promulgated the dogma that baptism and the Lord's supper are unlawfully administered except at the hands of a bishop—doctrine not to be found in scripture; being as manifestly at odds with the practice of the primitive church, as it is thoroughly congenial with the spirit of priestcraft. Tradition grew, apace, adding heresy to heresy, until the man of sin was thoroughly revealed, until nothing but the name of Christ and those of the apostles were retained in the visible church. And now, when Protestantism boasts to have effected a return to the primitive faith—even now, do we not find in certain sections of the reformed, a shameful, slavish, acquiescence with the

teaching of tradition ? Else, wherefore, in the polyglot bible before me, do I find implicit subscription to the Roman lie that Peter wrote at *Rome* the epistle which he dates from *Babylon* ? and to those traditions of him with which the Roman church beguiles her dupes ; when, according to the most ample negative evidence of scripture, he could never have set a foot in the eternal city ? Why do I find in the explanatory list of titles, “ Bishops, the successors of the “ apostles ? ” Why, I ask, is not every mesh of the hell-spun net of Rome rent to shreds and scattered to the winds, and no other authority recognised than that of the Lord’s own express instituting ? Why, in our colleges and universities, is the student of divinity directed, or encouraged, or *allowed*, to apply himself to the study of the so-called fathers, when God has provided his own exclusive teachers of *all* theology—the prophets and apostles ? Why is a knowledge of works that contradict one another —nay, no single one of which is free from the charge of, here or there, contradicting itself—why, I say, is the knowledge of such works deemed necessary towards accomplishing the pastor, when the student can resort to the writings of men whom God has appointed our instructors till the end of time, and whose labours are characterised by such unity as nothing but the inspiration of God can account for ? I allude to the Gospel, Epistles, and Revelation of

John ; to the epistles of James, Peter, and Jude ; to the epistles of Paul, and to the gospels of Mark and Luke—together with the Acts of the latter—all of which harmonise, in the grand main, with the one joint record of the select disciplehood, and, so, confirm, beyond the possibility of dispute, its paramount dignity and authority.

Pass now to the works of the so-called fathers—so called in point-blank defiance of the express prohibition of Christ ; who, foreseeing the execrable use that would be made of the title, which, *as regarded his church*, he stringently appropriated to the first person of the Trinity, commanded, “Call no man “your father upon the earth, for one is your Father “which is in heaven.”—Pass, I say, to the works of the so-called fathers, and contemplate the fruit of those works in the rank Roman apostasy. Contemplate it also in the splitting and crumbling of one huge branch of the protestant church ; behold there how “the dog has returned to his vomit and “the sow to her wallowing in the mire !” Admire the spectacle of an established church unable to maintain her own unity within her own pale, denouncing Rome and suffering Rome to be glorified !—amazed and indignant at the apostasy, virtual or actual, of layman after layman, pastor after pastor, and dignitary after dignitary ; and, nevertheless, allowing the arch apostle of heresy and schism, in company with a multitude of licensed dupes whom

he has seduced to savour, like himself, "not the "things that be of God, but those that be of men," to propagate rank popery, while he shelters himself, snugly and profitably, under the desecrated folds of a protestant stole.

Whence this appalling inconsistency in an establishment, which calls itself the church of the living God? Whence but from the carnal cherishing of the dogma of apostolic succession, that cornerstone of priestcraft? Where, in the Book, is it indicated, directly or indirectly, that the apostles should have successors? Is the dogma, or the shadow of an authority for it, to be found in the Gospels, in the Acts, in the Epistles, or in Revelation? No! In Revelation you have the figure of the church—"And there appeared a great wonder "in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the "moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown "of twelve stars." Here you have the apostles! Where are their successors? Again; you have the wall of the new Jerusalem—"And the wall of the "city had twelve foundations, and in them the "names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb;" the apostles again; but not a glimpse of their successors! Successors enter into all the powers and all the honours of those who precede them! Can we find here the slightest indication or recognition of such inherited power and honour? "Ask, and ye shall "receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it

“shall be opened unto you,” are promises made by the Lord before ever the special brotherhood was constituted ; nor were the whole of those, who subsequently composed that brotherhood, present when he spoke those cheering words ; consequently, as they were addressed to his disciples, at large, they bear reference to his church, at large ; and are available by the layman as well as by the so-called priest ; hence it follows of absolute necessity that the layman may become as well-instructed in the whole word of God ! But the so-called priest can boast of apostolic succession, the layman not ; and herein lies a difference ! Show me the virtue of the difference. If it possesses no virtue, the difference does not avail the worth of a straw. It is a fiction ; there is no difference ! But the so-called priest teaches. May not the layman teach if he possesses the same ability ? Ay, may he—nay, he must, if he knows his duty. He must “confess” Christ “before men ;” but he confesses him in vain, provided he does not give his reason for doing so. If he fail to give it, of his own accord, it will be demanded of him ; so, either way, when he confesses Christ he must preach Christ ; and preaching, whether it take place in the company of a single individual or in that of a dozen or a thousand individuals, is to all intents and purposes nothing more than one and the same act. But the layman has not passed through the collegiate divinity

course? He has gone through the Bible; he has studied it, "asking," "seeking," and "knocking;" he has applied himself to the study of it in the spirit of humility, and with faith and with prayer. Can any believer in the Bible entertain a doubt that he has "received," that he has "found," that it has been "opened to him?" Can the collegiate divinity course do more for him, in this respect, than God has done, in honour of his most gracious and positive promises?—in honour of his infallible word? But, then, there is wanting the laying on of hands, and the laying on of hands is scriptural. Unquestionably. But, though scriptural, it is a process which possesses no efficacy in itself, *that* must depend upon the state of the imponent and the recipient, otherwise, an infidel may ordain an infidel! It has been done, and is doing, every day in one apostate overgrown branch of the visible church. But the Holy Ghost is wanting? The mystical words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," must be pronounced over the kneeling candidate? If the candidate have not *already* received the Holy Ghost, he will hardly depart in company with the Comforter. The Samaritans had, in a measure, received the Holy Ghost, else they could not have received the word; but they had not received it to the extent of working miracles or speaking with tongues; and this the apostles knew, as they knew that such power was derivable from *none but themselves*; and there-

fore it was that they despatched Peter and John to Samaria, to crown the work which Philip had begun; but which, though he could work miracles himself, was unable to complete, in this respect. The Samaritans, through the influence of the Holy Ghost, *received* the word which Philip preached to them, and which Philip himself, through the same blessed agency, received from the preaching of the apostles, and which the apostles at this day are preaching to us, but which *we* cannot receive without the operation of the Holy Ghost! That operation varies in the direction which it gives to our faculties, and in the influence which it exercises over them. It prompts some to hear, and others to teach—to teach with more or less effect, and to hear with more or less profit; but the principle whence it proceeds is one and the same—the power of God; and one and the same the end to which it conduces—Faith. But as it is not all, who hear, that have faith, so it is not all, who teach, that have faith; even though they have been the recipients of the words, “Receive the ‘Holy Ghost.’”

But the power of remitting or retaining sins is wanting. Kneeling, he must receive the words, “Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; “and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.” This power was given to the apostles, alone. What text in scripture teaches that it was transferrable? None! How came the dignitaries of a church call-

ing itself Christian, to claim it? Rather, how came such a church to deal in dignitaries? Both questions are settled by one and the same answer. By slighting scripture; by practising tradition—tradition, akin to that in rebuke of which Christ declares, “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of “none effect by your tradition.” The power of forgiving sins was vested in the apostles alone, and with them, alone, has it continued to the present day, and will it continue to the last day.

Since I completed this work, except a single note, and one or two paragraphs, I have read it to several clergymen, one of whom subsequently consulted Archdeacon Townson’s work on the gospels, and found therein the very proposition which I have advanced and discussed, and kindly permitted me to take the book home with me. I give the Archdeacon’s own words: he is descanting upon the certainty, as he conceives, that the gospel assigned to Matthew must have been written at a very early period. He says:—

“Myriads of Jews who had embraced the faith “were yet zealous of the law. And it was well if “expectations of a temporal kingdom, and an in- “veterate confidence in rites and ceremonies, did not “still operate on the minds of the multitude, and “require ‘line on line, precept on precept,’ to teach “them the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom, and “that it demanded internal and universal obedience.

“These truths were, indeed, inculcated by the
“preaching of the apostles; but, if their followers
“were to read ‘Moses and the prophets’ in their
“houses, it was fit that they should have oppor-
“tunity of studying the law of Christ in the same
“manner.

“But a great number of them could seldom hear
“the instructions of the apostles, who, according to
“ancient and constant tradition, resided wholly in
“Judea, for several years after the ascension. And
“then the gospel was at first preached only to the
“Jews, it was not limited to Judea, but spread
“beyond it. Many converts were made of those
“who came to Jerusalem only on solemn occasions
“and for the rest of the year lived in other countries
“far distant from it. These converts must naturally
“desire to carry home with them a written gospel,
“for their own sake and for the promotion of the
“faith.

“A written gospel would enable them to know
“the certainty of those things wherein they had
“been instructed by the apostles, and to comprehend
“the several parts of a new dispensation much better
“than if they trusted to memory alone. It would
“fortify their minds against errors and prejudices,
“early received by themselves, and zealously es-
“poused by their countrymen. It would establish
“their faith, animate their hopes, and yield them
“that comfort and delight which pious minds feel in

“ meditating and reading the life and doctrine of
“ Christ.

“ It would serve as a criterion by which they
“ could prove and examine what was advanced by
“ those who appeared among them as preachers of
“ the gospel, whether it were according to the
“ analogy of the faith and the teaching of the
“ apostles.

“ It would add weight and power to their en-
“ deavours for the conversion of others in their
“ several places of abode. For however perfectly
“ they might be informed of facts and instructed in
“ doctrines, they wanted that authority to teach
“ others, which the gift of inspiration derived on
“ the apostles. But this would be in great measure
“ supplied to them by a gospel composed and ap-
“ proved at Jerusalem; which, in the very circum-
“ stances of its publication, carried with it the testi-
“ timony of the apostles, *and bore, as it were, the*
“ *seal of the whole sacred college to its truth.*

“ If, therefore, we consider the great advantages,
“ accruing to the believers in Judea, and the still
“ greater, to those of the dispersion, by a written
“ gospel, we cannot suppose that the pastoral care of
“ the apostles permitted their flock to remain long
“ without one.

“ It was for the honour of the gospel that it should
“ be quickly notified to the Jews in general, to con-
“ vincce them that it did not withdraw itself from

“the inquiry of its contemporaries, but proposed the
“facts on which it was founded, and scrutinized by
“those among whom they were done.

“It was a great act of charity to the Jewish nation
“to warn them, early, of the peril of rejecting the
“gospel, and a written account of it might gain
“access to many who stopped their ears against the
“preaching of the apostles.” — *Townson's Works*,
Discourse, 3, Section VI.

At Section V. of the same discourse, he previously
says:—

“However, it was expedient, for many reasons,
“that a written history of Christ should appear
“without much delay after his ascension. The apo-
“stles therefore, as their great caution and reserve
“lead us to infer, determined that *one of their body*,
“*and, for the present, only one, should undertake*
“*and publish such a work*—a work appealing to a
“multitude of living witnesses for many of its facts,
“and *attested by the chosen witnesses, in all its*
“*parts*; and, therefore, fit to be recommended to
“their followers and converts, as a standard of
“truth, by which the credibility of other relations
“might be examined and proved, this it was easy to
“preserve from interpolations and corruptions; since
“copies of it, taken by believers, or for their use,
“might be verified by the original, remaining with
“the central church at Jerusalem. And, for the
“sake of a like advantage, I apprehend the other

“gospels were afterwards published in cities of great “resort, and in which Christian churches the de-“positaries of the authenticated manuscripts were “well established.”

Here I find myself forestalled, *in the main*, and by a theologian of acknowledged high authority. For the sake of the truth which, if I know my own heart, I love better than myself—I wish I had been *wholly* forestalled; and that Townson had proceeded to prove his theory from scripture. A few days ago a friend informed me that the proposition had been mooted by German theologians. Would it had been mooted long ago, and received by the whole Christian world! The sticklers for apostolic succession had not, then, held their heads so high, with the whole of the twelve at hand and at work. In commencing this little treatise I was ignorant of everything that had been either said or written upon the subject. When that subject was *suggested* to my mind, after having pondered for years upon the words, which our blessed Lord, at parting, addressed to his disciples, I flew at once to my Bible, and, opening it at the chapter where Matthew’s call is announced, and associating with the relative time of that incident a few other circumstances that occurred to me at the moment, I went to work, with the firmest conviction that, with the light to guide me further, I should not labour in vain. Before this, my conviction that the Saviour’s promise must be strictly fulfilled, never

wavered, though I was still kept in darkness as to the means. As the direct dictation of the Holy Ghost was promised to the whole of the apostles, I concluded, as every one else must do, that, in our Lord's doctrine, as recorded by any one of them, we must possess the same doctrine that the rest would have taught had they also written; but this, though it would suffice for mankind, would not suffice for the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise to be with his disciples to the end of the world. That promise could not be accomplished except by the existence of a record, proceeding from the whole sacred brotherhood. It has been so accomplished, and that record is found in the gospel assigned to Matthew.

This little work has not been rashly or hastily constructed. It has occupied me, more or less constantly, during a lapse of about four years. It has been composed in fear, as regards my own ability; and, yet, in hope, as regards trust in God, and implicit faith in the all-sufficiency of his blessed word. I am now upon the verge of seeing my seventy-first birth-day. I have prayed that, if it seemed good to the Disposer of all events, He would spare me till I had finished my task. It has pleased Him to do so!—It has pleased my God and Redeemer to do so!—and I bless Him for this one mercy, in addition to countless others, of the least of which, it is my joy to thank Him, that I know myself to be utterly unworthy.

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